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Prabuddha Bharata

OR

AWAKENED INDIA

By Karma, Jnana, Bhakti, and Yoga, by one or more or all of these the Vision of the Paramatman is Obtained.

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CONTENTS

Integral Vision of Vedic Seers 245

About this Issue 246

Life in Freedom
—(*Editorial*) 246

The Second Chapter of the Gita
—*Swami Sridharananda* 256

Vedanta and the Modern World: Matter and Consciousness: Changing Perspectives in Modern Physics
—*Swami Jitatmananda* 266

Knowledge Comes, but Wisdom Lingers
—*Prof. Samarendra Krishna Bose* ... 276

Reviews and Notices 280

News and Reports 283

Notes and Comments 284

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. 91 JUNE 1986 No. 6

Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS*

'Truth is one: sages call It by various names'

यानि कानि चिच्छान्तानि लोके सप्तऋषयो विदुः ।
सर्वाणि शं भवन्तु मे शं मे अस्त्वभयं मे अस्तु ॥

Whatever means there are in the world for the attainment of peace and are known to the Seven Sages, may they all bring blessedness to me. May blessedness abide in me. May fearlessness abide in me.

Atharva-Veda 19.9.13

पृथिवी शान्तिरन्तरिक्षं शान्तिर्द्यौः शान्ति-
रापः शान्तिरोषधयः शान्तिर्वनस्पतयः
शान्तिर्विश्वे मे देवाः शान्तिः सर्वे
मे देवाः शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः
शान्तिभिः । ताभिः शान्तिभिः
सर्वं शान्तिभिः शमयामोहं यदिह
घोरं यदिह क्रूरं यदिह पापं तच्छान्तं
तच्छिवं सर्वमेव शमस्तु नः ॥

May the earth be peaceful. May the atmosphere be peaceful. May the sky be peaceful. May the waters be peaceful. May the herbs be peaceful. May all the gods grant me peace. May each god grant me peace. May through peace every being attain peace. May through all these forms of peace I attain blessedness. Whatever is dreadful, whatever is cruel, whatever is sinful in this world—may they all become peaceful. May everything confer blessedness upon us.

Atharva-Veda 19.9.14

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* The peace hymn from *Atharva-Veda* is concluded here. The hymn represents the positive, peaceful, gentle attitude of the ancient sages towards the world. In order to find peace in the world we must first feel peace within ourselves.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This month's EDITORIAL discusses the meaning and dimensions of freedom, its conditions and practical application in life.

In the fourth and concluding instalment of his commentary on the SECOND CHAPTER OF THE GITA Swami Sridharanandaji, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Lucknow, gives a pragmatic interpretation of the characteristics of a *sthitaprajña.*

In MATTER AND CONSCIOUSNESS: CHANGING PERSPECTIVES IN MODERN PHYSICS Swami Jitatmananda of Ramakrishna Math, Hyderabad, shows how the work of modern physicists seems to endow matter with some of the attributes of consciousness. The author has marshalled some of the latest concepts on the subject in a very stimulating and interesting manner.

KNOWLEDGE COMES, BUT WISDOM LINGERS by Prof. Samarendra Krishna Bose is a short essay which emphasizes in an elegant way the importance of the acquisition of wisdom in any scheme of education. The author is a lecturer in English at Vidyasagar College, Calcutta.

LIFE IN FREEDOM

(EDITORIAL)

A basic human need

The American Declaration of Independence which announced the birth of a new sovereign nation on the 4th of July 1776 is an important historical document. Like the Magna Carta (1215), the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted by the United Nations Assembly in 1948), it marks a milestone in the struggle of humanity to make available to all people the blessings of a life of freedom. The Declaration, drafted by Thomas Jefferson, opens with this famous line:

> We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

Of these fundamental rights liberty occupies a central place, for without it the other two, life and pursuit of happiness, lose their meaning. Hence thoughtful people have kept a watchful eye on the status of freedom in society. Almost two centuries after the declaration of independence Alfred Whitney Griswold, the late President of Yale University, voiced his concern at the erosion of the ideal of freedom in America. Speaking at the Columbia University Bicentennial in 1955, he raised certain pertinent questions:

> Though we celebrate freedom here tonight, over a large part of the earth the concrete definition of it has utterly ceased and in our part it has slowed almost to a standstill. Why so? On the other side of the iron curtain the reason is obvious. But at home? Why should the life process of freedom falter among its creators?[1]

Two years later, speaking to the Yale graduating class, President Griswold commented:

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1. Quoted in Harold Titus *Living Issues in Philosophy* (New York: American Book Company, 1968) p. 459

> Gentlemen of the graduating class: the society into which you now graduate is not as free as the one which produced the principles by which you have been educated. Bit by bit we have exchanged our freedom—voluntarily for the most part, involuntarily to some extent—for security, for productive efficiency, for creature comforts. But far from discounting the value of those educational principles, this puts them at a premium... Civilization can lose just so much of its freedom without losing all of it. The presence of individuals educated in these principles, who cleave to them and live according to them, is sorely needed to prevent such a catastrophe, to hold the balance between freedom and organization, to insure the continuity of the creative process without which organization is futile.2

It is of course true that in totalitarian countries the government exercises a rigid control over the lives of citizens. But even in democratic countries there is, as noted by John Stuart Mill in his famous essay *On Liberty*, a general tendency 'to stretch unduly the powers of society over the individual, both by the force of opinion and even by that of legislation.' Freedom is one of the basic attributes of human personality and, without it, a human being ceases to be a person. And without free communion among persons there can be no community. An assemblage of unfree individuals will be no better than a herd of cattle.

At the same time it is also true that a community will cease to be a society if every member of it behaves in any way he likes. Human society is thus a compromise between individual freedom and certain necessary social restrictions. This tension between freedom and necessity can be seen wherever men live or work together—in government departments, factories, educational institutions, political parties, even in monasteries. Though this tension cannot be wholly avoided, it can be minimized to a great extent by understanding the nature of human freedom. How can a person live as a free individual and realize the goal of his life within the society of which he is a part ? To find out the answer we have to understand the meaning of freedom.

Meaning of freedom

In the word 'freedom' two conceptions are implied: 'freedom from' and 'freedom for'. The first conception of freedom refers primarily to a condition characterized by the absence of coercion or constraint imposed by another person or social factors. As Bertrand Russel has put it, 'Freedom in general may be defined as the absence of obstacles to the realization of desires.' Explaining freedom as freedom from external compulsion, Alan M. Munn writes:

> A dog who, left to himself, might lie contentedly all day long in the shade of a tree, whines miserably if tied to the same tree for five minutes. Tom Sawyer's pals were willing to give up their most cherished possessions for a turn at white-washing his fence, but 'by jingo, they would wail like fettered injuns' if told they must do the same at home. The union steward, who on holiday will go tramping across country from dawn to dusk and then spend the evening in the pub, would call a strike if half that amount of energy were required at 'work'. All are protesting the same thing: compulsion, restriction of their freedom to choose what it is they want to do.3

'Freedom from' is sometimes called 'negative freedom' and, since the constraints are mostly external, it is also called 'external freedom.' Most of what are called 'civic liberties' belong to this type. Civil liberties include freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom to elect representatives of the government, freedom

2. Ibid.

3. Alan M. Munn, *Free-Will and Determinism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960) p. 7

of worship, etc. all of which imply the absence of external coercion or restrictions imposed by legal or executive agencies. However, the mere absence of such constraints does not give a person freedom to act in any way he likes. For instance, a sweeper is as free as a rich landlord to build a high rise building; a tramp is as free as a wealthy man to enjoy a sumptuous dinner everyday. But the sweeper is unable to build the mansion and the tramp is unable to get a sumptuous dinner because neither of them has the financial power to realize his objective. In the underdeveloped countries there are millions of people who do not have adequate food, clothing or shelter. The only freedom that is meaningful to them is freedom from want. Like civic liberties, freedom from want also belongs to the category of external or negative freedom.

What is called external freedom is often nothing but an equality of opportunities. No government can afford to feed and clothe all the citizens of the country; what it really does is to provide equality of opportunities for development. Those who make use of these opportunities become rich or learned or powerful. So if a certain minimum of basic external freedom is assured, what really matters in life is choice, personal initiative, what John Stuart Mill has termed 'individuality'. This 'freedom for'—freedom to be or to do what one likes—is the positive aspect of freedom and, since it depends upon the faith, knowledge, will-power and other psychological factors, it is called 'inner freedom'. A school or college provides equal opportunities to all students to acquire knowledge but only those who make full use of these opportunities acquire knowledge and pass the examinations. A monastery provides equal opportunities to all its inmates, but only those who are inwardly free make use of these opportunities and attain knowledge or spiritual illumination.

The presence of external conditions and opportunities constitutes only the negative side of human freedom. Their purpose is to restore to man his individuality, to make his life 'inner-directed' as David Riesman put it, to make a human being what Carl Rogers called a 'fully functioning person' or what Eric Fromm called an 'autonomous person'. This negative essential freedom is the basis of a person's right to live his own life in the way he likes. But to live in the way he likes invariably involves a choice between good life and bad life, between enlightened life and ignorant life, or between spiritual life and worldly life. This inner freedom of choice is the positive aspect of freedom. The positive, essential meaning of freedom is a person's power to determine his personal mode of existence by the free decisions he makes.

Freedom and power

It is clear that there is a close connection between power and freedom, both external and internal. In the discussion above on external freedom we have seen that a poor man is unable to build a big house or have a sumptuous dinner not because of lack of freedom but because of lack of financial power. Where people have unequal power there their freedom also will be unequal. Richer and more powerful men have a wider range of choice than their poorer brothers. Not only that; more powerful people can restrict the range of choice and the freedom of the less powerful. It is well known that big industrial houses exercise such control over property or means of production or over the media of communication that they can determine to some extent what the poor people should eat or wear or enjoy. It is this connection

between inequality of power and inequality of freedom that has brought into existence civic liberties and independent judiciary in democratic countries and the concept of dictatorship of the proletariat in communist countries.

In the inner world of the individual also there exists a connection between freedom and power. Weak-minded people easily succumb to vices and temptations. It needs great strength of mind to choose always the path of goodness, love, peace ; it needs strength of mind to free oneself from obsessions, phobias and addictions. Jealousy and hatred are sure signs of inner weakness, and only a strong person can free himself from them. 'Never can hatred and malice vanish from one's heart unless one becomes a hero', says Swami Vivekananda, 'and unless one is free from these how can one become truly civilized ?'[4]

Relation between the two types of freedom

Both the types of freedom—external and internal—are necessary for the growth of an individual and the welfare of a society. However, of these two, internal freedom is more important than external freedom. Without inner freedom too much external freedom could even be harmful. A person who is a slave of his passions is likely to make use of his external freedom to indulge freely in sense pleasures. This is the reason why hippyism, prostitution and other types of immorality are more prevalent in the democratic countries of the West than in communist countries where people have less external freedom. Here it is good to remember Cicero's famous dictum: 'Excessive liberty leads both nations and individuals into excessive slavery'. The rise of fundamentalism in almost all Islamic countries is an autocorrective social process intended to stem the tide of immorality generated by the acquisition of wealth and contact with western culture. In several Latin American countries a new movement called 'Liberation Theology' has arisen within the Catholic Church. Instead of trying to liberate the minds of people from fanaticism, lust and greed, what the liberation theologians are doing is to motivate poor people to start a communist type of revolution. In the Indian society religion, caste, family ties and other social institutions have for centuries exercised a restraining influence on the external freedom of the people. With the introduction of secularism and western values this restraining influence has considerably weakened, and the results are not salutary.

A certain degree of external freedom is no doubt necessary for the development of an individual and of a society, but its role has been exaggerated in modern times especially by young people. No amount of external freedom can give a person inner freedom and, without inner freedom, external freedom can have little meaning. When the eighteenth-century Scottish sailor Alexander Selkirk was marooned on a Pacific island, he found himself 'monarch of all I survey/My right there is none to dispute.' And yet he was utterly miserable ; he could not bear the intense solitude and exclaimed, 'O, solitude! Where are the charms that sages have seen in thy face ?'[5] A person who is inwardly liberated does not stand in need of too much external freedom. Some of the greatest mystical works were composed by men and women who never went out of their cloisters or hermitages. Compared to lay people,

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4. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1972) Vol. 7, p. 271

5. From the famous poem of William Cowper (1731-1800).

monks have less external freedom and yet they lead peaceful and creative lives within the four walls of the monastery, and some of them attain high levels of spiritual illumination and freedom. Thousands of women in India and other countries find happiness and fulfilment doing endless chores in their homes which they seldom leave. Pandit Nehru was imprisoned by the British rulers of India several times, but Nehru kept his mind free and utilized the time he spent in jails to produce masterpieces of history and English literature.

In the present discussion we are interested chiefly in inner freedom, for the real bondage of man is the bondage of his soul. As a minor Upaniṣad puts it, 'Mind is the cause of man's bondage and freedom.'[6]

Dimensions of inner freedom

What exactly is this inner freedom we have been speaking of? Granting that we have enough external freedom, are we really free inwardly to think and act in any way? Are we not influenced by our own prejudices, ambitions and fears and also by those of other people? How much inner freedom have we really got to choose, to decide, to act? These are vital questions not only for the philosopher but also for the practical man. Upon the solution to these questions depend the answers to several other important questions concerning the nature of the soul, freedom of the will, ethical standards, the existence of evil, social attitudes, divine grace, self-effort, law of karma, etc. In practical life the question of inner freedom deals directly with our existential problems of life and the means of solving them.

A little introspection or an alert understanding of our reactions is enough to reveal to us that we are not inwardly as free as we think we are, and that several aspects of inner life are involved in the notion of inner freedom. In fact, inner freedom is a term which connotes one or more of the following three kinds of freedom. 1. Freedom of alternative choice: that is, the ability of the agent to choose among alternative possibilities of action. 2. Freedom of self-determination: that is, the ability of the agent to follow a way of life independent of external constraints but in accordance with his inner motives and ideals. 3. Indeterminacy: this is a philosophical term which means that the will is intrinsically free and has the power to remain independent of the agent's character, motives and circumstances.

That these three dimensions of freedom are closely interrelated will be clear from a more detailed discussion of their nature.

Freedom and choice

Every sane action of a man is the result of a choice. Since human life is a very complex interaction among different individuals in various situations, we are constantly called upon to make decisions. To make a decision almost always means to choose between alternative courses of action. To make a choice is one of the most difficult thing to do. A wrong choice can ruin a person's or a company's fortunes. Worse still is indecision, inability to make a choice, which leads to procrastination. A classic example of this attitude is provided by Hamlet.

To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them?

---

6. मन एव मनुष्याणां कारणं बन्धमोक्षयो: ।
Amṛtabindupaniṣad, 2

Hamlet went on cogitating like this and procrastinated until almost everyone connected with his life, including himself, was killed.

Why is decision making so difficult? We usually attribute this difficulty to our lack of knowledge of the things we have to choose between. A businessman who has to choose between two contracts, a young man who has to decide whether to get married or to join a monastery, a politician who has to side with one of the two warring factions in his party, a police officer who has to face an unruly mob—all of them have to reckon the unknown consequences of their decisions. This, however, is not the main difficulty. The main difficulty is that we are not quite free inwardly to make choices.

Freedom of choice implies several factors. First of all, it implies goal orientation. Goal orientation means the soul's orientation not only to an ultimate goal but also to a proximate or limited goal. The ultimate goal of everyone is to seek his own good, and many people also seek the good of other people as long as that does not clash with their own good. Apart from this ultimate goal, every one of us has to choose proximate goals which are to be and can be attained immediately—in the school, government office, factory, shop, playground, wherever we work. Only when these goals are fixed can we think of the appropriate means for their attainment. But the proximate goals are contingent upon several factors and go on changing, and so to fix a pragmatic goal is a difficult task in itself. This task will, however, be much easier if we understand or strive to establish the connection between our life's ultimate goal and the immediate tasks before us. There must be an unchanging background to all our actions and practical goals. If you are a scientist and if the immediate aim of your work is to discover a new medicine or evolve a new theory, you should know how this work is connected to your ultimate goal in life. If you are a businessman and if your immediate aim is to increase the sales of your company's product, you should know how this aim is connected to your ultimate goal in life. If you are a teacher and if your immediate task is to see that every student in your class passes the examinations, you should know how this task is connected to your ultimate goal in life. This is the meaning of Ralph Waldo Emerson's famous exhortation, 'Hitch your wagon to a star'. If you have a fixed star in your mental firmament, you can always be sure of your bearings without getting lost among the constellations of emotions. That will give you greater interior manoeuvrability thereby making free choice easier.

This connection between immediate goals and the ultimate goal is what is meant by 'values'. Values mediate between the ultimate and the proximate. Adherence to a definite system of values makes it easier to make decisions and choices. Values are determined by culture; so if you want to have a clear-cut system of values, you have to identify yourself with a definite culture. Such an identification is possible only with the culture in which you were born and have grown up. In modern times greater communication has brought about the mingling of cultures, and this has resulted in a confusion of values.

The second factor in freedom of choice is self-fulfilment.[7] We spontaneously choose that which appears to bring us fulfilment. There is a spontaneous urge in all people to be creative, to create new forms of truth, goodness and beauty out

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7. Another term used is 'self-realization'; since this term has various other connotations, we have retained here the term 'self-fulfilment'.

of life. This is known as creativity ; it is the intrinsic elan of the self to express itself. The fulfilment of this inner urge is what is known as self-fulfilment or 'manifestation of the potential divinity already present in the soul', as Swami Vivekananda has put it. Creativity is a powerful urge, and a person in whom it functions freely has little difficulty in making right decisions or choices in life. When creativity is suppressed, it produces what Eric Fromm has termed 'inner passivity'. A person whose creativity has been dammed up may be very active externally but his soul remains listless, dissatisfied, powerless. Hence he finds it difficult to make choices and prefers to have other people decide things for him.

It is with the hope of attaining self-fulfilment that people work. But mechanization, bureaucracy and commercialization of almost every aspect of life leave little scope for the free expression of the soul's creativity. Most people in modern times feel unfree in their work. That is why they eagerly seek leisure. But as long as 'inner passivity' continues, as long as the soul remains bound, leisure itself can become an intolerable boredom unless its monotony is relieved by newspapers, novels, television, playing cards and other distractions which all leave them empty and unfulfilled.[8]

It is, however, well known that mere knowledge of the goal or the urge for fulfilment is not enough to give us the inner freedom to choose. Why do people often pursue the path of evil or make wrong decisions even after knowing the painful consequences of their action ? To find the answer we have to examine the act of choice itself. Is the act of choice or decision totally free, or is predetermined ? Is a person free to determine the course of his own life, or is every thought and action of his conditioned and controlled by forces beyond his control ?

Free will and determinism

From Plato onwards western philosophers have held that the mind consists of three faculties: the cognitive faculty of knowing and reasoning, the conative faculty of will, and the affective faculty of emotions. It is generally accepted that choice or decision is a function of the will. So freedom of choice really means freedom of will. But is the will really free ? There are two views on this question. The view which holds that the will is intrinsically free is known as 'Indeterminism'. The view which holds that the will is not free but is determined by other mental or physical conditions is known as 'Determinism'.[9]

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8. In *The Revolution of Hope* (New York: Bantam Books, 1968) Eric Fromm argues that the concept of activity is one of the most widespread of man's illusions in modern industrial society. The whole culture is geared to activity which means being busy ; even the leisure time is simply used for some activity. When there is nothing to do, man is indeed afraid. Continuing, he says, 'The trouble is that most people who think they are very active are not aware of the fact that they are intensely passive in spite of their busyness. Without some stimuli from outside to trigger activity they are lost. If nothing is done, it is time to confront oneself which is to be avoided.' (p. 40)

9. These are psychological theories. The terms 'determinism' and 'indeterminism' are also used in the realm of metaphysics. There determinism refers to the doctrine that every fact in the universe is guided by law. It was first propounded by the Greek philosopher Democritus (c. 460-370 B. C.) and developed in modern centuries by Descartes, Hobbes and others. According to these thinkers, the course of all events from the motion of stars to that of atoms constitutes an unbroken chain of cause and effect and the future is entirely determined by the past. (Strangely enough, this theory bears close resemblance to the religious doctrines of 'fatalism' and 'predestination' found in several

The words of the Persian poet Omar Khayyam, 'With earth's first clay they did the last man knead', is a poetical expression of determinism. The German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer expressed it more clearly when he stated that the course of a man's life is 'as necessarily predetermined as the course of a clock' and that 'a man can surely do what he wills to do, but he cannot determine what he wills.' Bertrand Russel put it in the form of a paradox: 'We can do as we please but we can't please as we please.'

William James, the famous American psychologist and philosopher, drew a distinction between 'soft' and 'hard' determinism. In the first category he included the views of Hume, Mill and others who believed in determinism but conceded a certain degree of autonomy of human action. A classical example of 'hard' determinism is the view of Benedict Spinoza (1632-1677). For him God or Nature (he regarded both as one) is the only self-existent substance, and mind and matter are attributes of this one substance. This Reality is completely rational and everything is governed by a universal order. The will is only a mode of thought and so there can be no separation in men between thought and will. No volition can exist unless it is determined by another cause, this by another, and so on. Thus only the Universe or God as the collective whole can be said to be completely free. How is it, then, that people frequently consider themselves to be free agents? Spinoza's answer is that this is only a delusion caused by their ignorance of the real causes of their actions.

On the other side, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) allowed a certain degree of autonomy to will. According to him will is the faculty of good and it can never will evil. It acts according to a conception of law but has the power of creating its own objective ideal. Kant's view was criticized by Hegel (1770-1831) who regarded life as an interaction between individual selves and the Supreme Self. According to Hegel, freedom of will is the freedom of the self. Hegel's thesis was criticized by Soren Kierkegaard (1813-55) who found the essence of freedom in the individual's consciousness. In modern times existentialist philosophers like Sartre have written a great deal about 'individuality, freedom, choice and dread'. Though these thinkers have exposed the several contradictions and hypocrisies of modern man's life and his longing for freedom, their ideas tantamount to nothing more than a confounded form of nihilism. Some believing existentialists like Gabriel Marcel and Paul Tillich regard freedom as liberation from one's isolated individuality through participation in the Divine.

A fatal blow to the theory of free will in modern times was delivered by Sigmund Freud and his followers. According to these psychologists, every action and thought of man is determined by motivations originating in the unconscious. The conscious mind and the ego are almost wholly under the control of the unconscious mind of which ordinary people have little knowledge. Freud regarded the unconscious as bad, the seat of all passions and conflicts. Some modern 'humanistic' psychologists like Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow

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religious traditions but most vociferously upheld by Protestant theologians). Werner Heisenberg's 'Uncertainty principle' is believed to have given a blow to this view, at least in the realm of subatomic particles. However, indeterminism as a universally applicable metaphysical doctrine is yet to be fully developed, although several modern scientists like James Jeans and Jacques Monod have done some work in this direction. In the present article we are concerned only with the psychological aspects of determinism and indeterminism.

believe that the unconscious is the seat of good as well as bad tendencies.

Passing on from philosophy to religion, we find that both Christianity and Islam have strongly favoured the doctrine of determinism. Many of the Christian theologians' controversies over divine prescience, predestination and other doctrines are so crude that they do not deserve a detailed discussion here. It may be mentioned here that Catholics allow a greater degree of freedom of choice to man than Protestants do. According to St. Augustine, true freedom is the capacity not to become the slave of sin but to submit oneself to divine law. But it is God alone who can give this freedom to man—'God worketh in us both to will and to do'. Adam and Eve were no doubt free at first, and yet they sinned. That shows no man can save himself by the exercise of his own will which can only lead him to damnation. God alone can save man from sin and give him the freedom to follow virtue. This view of Augustine was developed further by Martin Luther who compared the human will to the will of a beast of burden which is ridden by either God or Satan. With John Calvin theological determinism reached its extreme limit.

Atman and saṁskāras

A satisfactory existential view reconciling both free will and necessity was developed only in India. The Indian view is based on certain fundamental presuppositions of Indian thought like the Atman, karma, *saṁskāra* and rebirth.

A significant deficiency in western thought is the absence of a well-developed conception of the self. Right from Plato and Aristotle western thinkers have regarded the human personality as dichotomous, that is, as consisting of the body and the mind, the mind itself being considered the spirit or soul. Since the will is only a special function of the mind and the mind itself is controlled by thoughts and desires, the will can never be free. At the same time, there is this existential fact that everyone has at least a vague sense of being a free agent. Western thinkers have been unable to locate the source of this intrinsic sense of freedom.

The Indian view, accepted by all schools of Hindu philosophy, is that the human personality is trichotomous; it consists of the body, the mind and the Atman. The Atman in its true higher nature is uncreated, self-luminous, eternally pure, unattached and free. But in conjunction with the mind it appears as the lower or empirical self, the ego. The will is a faculty of the *buddhi* (a higher dimension of the mind) and appears as a function of ego. Furthermore, every experience and action leaves a subliminal trace in the mind called *saṁskāra* which sprouts later on as a desire or tendency to repeat that action or experience. Human life is a chain of birth and rebirth, and the *saṁskāras* of all pervious births are stored in the unconscious depths of the mind. The ego and the will are naturally conditioned and limited by these *saṁskāras*. But through spiritual disciplines, classed under the general term yoga, it is possible to purify the mind of these subliminal traces or at least to deactivate most of them. The person then realizes his true nature as the ever-free transcendent Atman. The *buddhi* then reflects this inner light and the will becomes an instrument of the higher Self. In other words, freedom of the will is an expression of the freedom of the Atman. Only illumined persons who have realized the Atman have free will. This has been clearly stated by Swami Vivekananda in his *Inspired Talks* as follows:

> Remember always that only the free have free will; all the rest are in bondage and are not

responsible for what they do.[10] Will as will is bound. The water when melting on the top of the Himalayas is free, but becoming the river, it is bound by the banks. Yet the original impetus carries it to the sea and it regains its freedom.[11]

The presence of the Atman gives every one a sense of being a free agent but, unless this Atman is directly realized, nobody can attain true inner freedom.

An existential philosophy of freedom

Almost all the systems of Indian philosophy are agreed upon one point: that the ultimate goal of life is *mukti*; everlasting freedom. Two points are to be kept in mind in trying to understand what *mukti* really means. First, *mukti* is not merely freedom from all sorrow but also freedom from happiness as it is experienced through the senses by ordinary people. Both sorrow and happiness bind the soul, and both are products of *ajñāna*, ignorance. Second, *mukti* is not a passive state produced by freedom from physical and mental activities. In the state of deep sleep (*suṣupti*) also there is almost complete cessation of activities, and besides there is total absence of sorrow; but deep sleep is a state of limited awareness in which the soul remains in bondage. Mukti, by contrast, is a state of intense awareness and power.

Thus *mukti* is not mere freedom from sorrow or work, but total freedom from ignorance and is a state of intense awareness and power. The word *ānanda* often used to describe this state should be understood not as happiness but as supreme peace, the peace that passeth all understanding. Obviously, an ordinary person cannot even imagine what this ultimate freedom is like. He can have some idea of it only when he gains a glimpse of the light of his inner Self and becomes to a great extent free from the three basic instinctual drives of pleasure seeking (*rāga*), fear (*bhaya*) and hate (*dveṣa*).

The important thing is to make use of the freedom we already possess and make every effort to enlarge it. This is the immediate task before us—how to remain as free as possible in the environment we find ourselves in, how to exercise our inner freedom (even if it is not much) and how to avoid getting into bondage. The great tragedy of human life is that most people do not exercise the little and only real freedom they have in their souls. Instead, they think of only external constraints and difficulties, over most of which they have little control, and waste a lot of energy in fighting and competing with other people. In that process they get more and more bound inwardly.

The vast majority of people we come across and have to live with are in bondage, slaves to lust and greed and hate and fear and vanity. What everyone needs is more inner freedom, and the greatest service we can render to other people is to help them to find their inner freedom. Unfortunately, many people are unaware of the extent of their inner bondage. When an unfree person loves other people what he or she does is to bind them to him or her. Very often it is hatred for a common enemy that unites people in apparent love. Only a free person can truly love and, even if he cannot free others from bondage, he at least sees to it that he is not instrumental in causing bondage to other people.

There is at present the need for an authentic existential philosophy of freedom.

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10. It may be mentioned here that, during the early part of this century, the famous U.S. attorney Clarence Darrow saved many men from the gallows by his eloquent plea that those condemned men could not help being what they were and doing what they had done.

11. *Complete Works* (1972) Vol. 7, p. 99

Swami Vivekananda has already laid the foundation for such a philosophy. The traditional Vedantic philosophies prevalent in India place *mukti* as the ultimate goal. Swamiji made freedom the starting point as well as the end point, the alpha and omega, of the great adventure of living. It is well known that Swamiji taught four yogas as independent paths to the ultimate Reality. For the practice of each of these yogas the starting point is freedom. You need inner freedom to exercise the knowledge you already possess for the practice of Jñāna yoga, to exercise the devotion and faith that you already possess for the practice of Bhakti yoga, to exercise your will-power for the practice of Raja yoga, to exercise the love you already have for the practice of Karma yoga. Without a certain minimum of inner freedom you cannot embark upon any of these yogas.

Why did Swami Vivekananda give so much importance to freedom? Because it is all that man lacks. Everything else—purity, strength, knowledge, devotion—that he seeks is inherent in his inner Self. There is a close connection between freedom and awareness. The more the freedom the inner Self gets, the more will it manifest the above qualities. Be free as much as you can and let the inner Self do the rest. The inner Light will lead us unerringly, unfailingly to the ultimate goal. Thus Swamiji has shown us a way of living free in the world with the limited inner freedom that we already possess, even though we have far less freedom in the external world.

'Freedom, freedom is the song of my soul', Swami Vivekananda used to say. In a way, it is the song of every soul, only few people care to listen to the song of their own souls.

THE SECOND CHAPTER OF THE GITA

(A Running Commentary)

SWAMI SRIDHARANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

We have seen that the second chapter of the Gita begins with the awakening of Arjuna followed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa's exposition of the true nature of Atman, the Self. Then Kṣṛṇa defines yoga in two ways, as equanimity (*samattva*) and skill (*kauśala*) in action—both based on the realization of the true Self. However, for a practical-minded man like Arjuna these ideas are quite abstract. He needs a concrete example, a person who has actually realized the truth of the Self in his life. It is much easier to observe the traits of other people and imitate them.

As a matter of fact the *guru-kula* system of education prevalent in India in ancient times was to a great extent based on the principles of following (*anusaraṇa*) and imitating (*anukaraṇa*) of the teacher by students. Through imitation they enrich themselves and then, by using their own intelligence and effort, they can improve upon what they have learnt and produce something original or innovative. For instance, Einstein who grew up imbibing Newtonian concepts, later on outgrew them and became a genius in his own right making his startlingly original contribution

of the theory of relativity to world thought.

Śaṁkarācārya in his commentary makes an important observation in this context. He says: 'Wherever in the scriptures the characteristics of a perfected man are described, they are meant to serve as a discipline for the beginner, for he too can attain those qualities through his efforts'.[1] That is, by emulating the actions of an illumined person an aspirant can actually acquire his qualities. This emulation is not an easy process; at first he may fail several times. Take, for instance, the quality of self-possession which is a characteristic of a *kṛtārtha*, perfected soul. Even while trying to cultivate this virtue the aspirant may often lose his temper over something petty, but then he says, 'I should not have behaved that way. I could have kept my wisdom and poise intact without being lost in my anger.' Next time when the cause of anger recurs, he holds back the expression of his anger a little longer. Thus he goes on practising until a time comes when he can really control himself externally. Finally, having mastered himself and developed a new perspective, even the cause of anger disappears altogether from his mind. This process of self-evolution is *sādhanā*, a conscious, diligent, persevering effort to become a better specimen of a human being. By sincerely imitating a *samādhistha* or *kṛtārtha* a person changes his old tendencies and builds a new personality and attains perfection.

We are now in a position to understand the rationale behind Arjuna's questions: 'O Keśava, how does a *sthitaprajña*, a person who is fully established in equanimity through the realization of the Self, speak to others? How does he sit or take rest and how does he move about in society?'[2] Suppose a person, by his own effort, or by the help of his Guru and the grace of God, attains the state of perfect equanimity, how does he conduct himself? How does he find a via media between absorption in samādhi and the call of duty in the mundane world? How does his enlightenment reflect in his ordinary behaviour pattern?

When Sri Ramakrishna was asked whether he was a Paramahamsa, his reply was, 'What do you expect to see in a Paramahamsa? Should I grow two horns and a tail to convince you?' Does an illumined soul behave in an uncommon or unnatural way? No; he continues to live a normal life like others, but he has undergone a total metamorphosis within. There is a popular notion that, after attaining Samādhi and getting saturated with the wisdom of the Atman, a person becomes inactive and silent as if he were a stone or log of wood. The fact is that he remains a natural person of flesh and blood but his values have undergone a total change, and his reactions to the stimuli of the world take place at a higher plane of consciousness than it does in ordinary people.

As a matter of fact, what spiritual illumination does is to make a person perfectly normal. It is the unillumined people who are abnormal, in varying degrees. When Swami Vivekananda was in America he once gave a talk on Vedanta to a distinguished audience at the Harvard University. After the talk he was asked about hypnotism. Swamiji's answer was: 'What you call hypnotism in the West is only a part of the real thing. The Hindus call it self-hypnotization. They say you are hypnotized already, and that you

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1. सर्वत्रैव ह्यध्यात्मशास्त्रे कृतार्थलक्षणानि यानि तान्येव साधनान्युपदिश्यन्ते यत्नसाध्यत्वात् ।

Śaṁkara, Commentary on *Gītā* 2.55

2. *Gītā* 2.54

should get out of it and dehypnotize yourself'.[3] A *sthitaprajña* is one who has fully dehypnotized himself. He is free from all delusions. This is what Śrī Kṛṣṇa is going to tell in the next verse.[4]

The Blessed Lord said: Arjuna, a person who is firmly established in the wisdom of the Self gets rid of all his petty desires. Through purification and concentration he discovers and eliminates one by one the deep-seated ambitions and fears which motivate his actions and thoughts. But this emptying the heart of its turbid contents is only the negative aspect of his wisdom. It is a well-known psychological fact that it is desires which lead to action. So, if all the desires are eradicated, how will such a person act ? Will he not find himself empty ? No. Spiritual wisdom has a positive aspect also: the place vacated by desires gets filled with the awareness of the glory of the Self. He is a *sthitaprajña* who realizes the joy of communion with his own Being: he lives by his Self and for his Self, manifesting his potential divinity—this is his inner state of mind.

After a description of this inner state a practical standard is given in the next verse[5] to measure the stability of his wisdom. A *sthitaprajña* is a *muni*, one who is *mananaśīla*, highly introspective and meditative, uninterruptedly cogitating within and keeping a sharp watch on his mental mechanisms. When misfortune or sorrow comes to him, he does not break down but takes it in his stride because he knows it is an unavoidable phase of life. When happiness comes to him he does not get deluded, for he knows that it is yet another passing phase.

He is able to maintain such imperturbability because he has freed himself from attachment, fear and anger. *Rāga* is the incipient liking and attachment to things; *bhaya* is the fear of losing what you have or the fear of not being able to get what you desire, and *krodha* is the resultant of these two: you become disappointed, irritated and wrathful when your schemes fall through. In the *Vairāgya Śatakam*, Bhartṛhari says: 'If you are enjoying yourself you are afraid that it will rebound on your health; if you have reputation you are afraid of losing it; if you have wealth you are afraid of thieves; if you have talents you are afraid of their negation; if you have youth you are afraid of impending old-age. Everything this world gives you is accompanied by fear. If there is anything which is beyond the hold of fear, it is *vairāgya* or renunciation of all expectations from the world.' If you are absolutely content in whichever circumstances you are, then *rāga*, *bhaya* and *krodha* will have no hold on you. The *muni*, meditative person, throws these drives out of his mind and attains stability of mind.

Arjuna's first question, 'How does he speak ?' is answered in the next verse.[6] He whose wisdom is absolutely stabilized is no longer subject to the two vagaries of human character—praise and blame—which are the normal reactions of people in this world. When we get pleasant experiences, we praise the people or things that caused those experiences. When we get unpleasant

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3. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1973) 5.303

4. प्रजहाति यदा कामान्सर्वान्पार्थ मनोगतान् ।
आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ।।
Gītā 2.55

5. दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।
वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ।।
Gītā 2.56

6. यः सर्वत्रानभिस्नेहस्तत्तत्प्राप्य शुभाशुभम् ।
नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ।।
Gītā 2.57

experiences, we blame those responsible for them. Most of our talk consists of these two only—praise and blame. These betray our attachment to the world.

But what is wrong in attachment ? Is it not the way of growth ? If a person is absolutely self-centred and remains unconcerned or unmoved by what happens to others, then he is not human at all. To love one's children and to be concerned about them means that, to that extent, one has grown and expanded one's ego. What is wrong is that in the process of being involved in the world and its interactions of good and bad factors, one loses one's balance and becomes extremely irritable. The harm lies in making a small circle around oneself identifying oneself only with that limited circle and in trying to harm anyone outside it.

Taking the meaning of the word 'unattached' literally may lead us to the pitfall of absolute self-centredness. If a man is concerned only with his own interests he will be worse than a beast. There is a story which illustrates this point. When a dying Sadhu cried for water, another Sadhu, who could not stand his suffering, ran to give him a glass of water. But another person who prided himself as a perfectly unattached Vedantin, gave the second Sadhu a slap and said that he should not give the water as the other Sadhu was suffering owing to his *prārabdha*, which destined him to die crying for a drop of water. So, to go by the literal meaning of 'non-attachment' is to reduce oneself to stony-heartedness, to cease to be a human being.

But the spirit of the teaching has been brought out by Madhusūdana Saraswati who said: *yadi mamatvam na muñceta, kuru mamatvam sarvatra.* If you cannot be free from the sense of identification which is a human propensity then you should identify yourself with all people uniformly everywhere. Do not make a selective identification but extend yourself everywhere to all people without distinction. Do not say he is my loved one, but let the whole world be your loved one ; let the difference of mine and not-mine disappear. You lose the capacity to rise above your likes and dislikes when you live in a closed circle, for anything outside it you do not consider your own.

But it is not possible to make the understanding well poised in this manner without perfect control over the *indriyas.* This point is stated in the next verse.[7] The sense-organs are continuously assailed from all directions by the impressions of various kinds of objects in the outer world. But through the practice of renunciation the wise man withdraws his five senses from their objects and brings them under the inner direction of the will, like the tortoise withdrawing its four legs and its head from all sides into its shell whenever there is any disturbance from outside. The senses are the powers of seeing, hearing etc. behind the visible organs, and what the wise man does is to break the inner connection between the light, sound, etc. and the seat of interpretation of those wave-stimuli in his brain by the exercise of his will-power. And this he does not as a means of escape but to free the mind so that it can concentrate on the Self in Samādhi. Then his mind becomes stable because it is no longer disturbed by the agitations of the sense organs.

However, this does not mean that every one who succeeds in withdrawing his senses from external objects is a *sthitaprajña*.

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7. यदा संहरते चायं कुर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥
Gītā 2.58

This is pointed out in the next verse.[8] A person who starves himself also has his sense organs withdrawn from sense-objects, but this is only suppression of desires and not their sublimation: the craving to taste and enjoy objects persists in him, even though he has, to some extent, controlled the outward operation of his senses. The relish or subtle tendency of attachment remains hidden within his mind. But when a man of well-poised understanding has a vision of the Atman and tastes the bliss of transcendent Reality, then all his desires are fulfilled and he no longer wishes for anything in the world, even the relish for sense-objects disappears from his mind spontaneously without a trace.

There appears to be a vicious circle involved here: it is said that without developing *anāsakti* you cannot attain Samādhi ; at the same time it is also said that, without the realization of the Self, attachment to the illusory world, *āsakti*, will not go. So, does *anāsakti* come first or does Ātma-jñāna come first ? Now it is a very pragmatic expression to say that desire for objects is removed only when conviction arises that Atman is the highest of all objects. It is not only that attachment must move from grosser to more subtle and, finally, to the highest and most excellent object, but that attachment to Atman precludes all other attachments and in the end it also eliminates itself. Unless there is the experience of the transcendent Atman, subtle traces of attachment may remain in the sādhaka, but they are not strong enough to bind him. So the vicious circle may be broken thus: develop *anāsakti* for the world but *āsakti* for the Atman, which is self-eliminating.

Yet another important aspect of sense control is discussed in the next verse.[9] In spite of man's best efforts there are occasions when his mind moves out of his control without his being aware of it. O son of Kunti, even if a man is ever so introspective, discriminating and striving for self-discipline, the senses are naturally turbulent and constantly create commotion or disquiet in his mind. New sense-impressions come like a storm when you are not even conscious that a storm is brewing, and your mind is carried away forcibly and impetuously—your wisdom is stolen from you, as it were.

After thus preparing the ground for dealing with Arjuna's second question (How does a *sthitaprajña* sit ?) Kṛṣṇa now answers it in the next verse.[10] Everyone who sits in meditation is not necessarily a *sthitaprajña*. When a man of steady wisdom meditates, his whole mind gets absorbed in the Supreme Self and his senses get totally withdrawn from external objects in a natural way without leaving any trace of worldliness in his mind and without disturbing it until his meditation is over.

Now Kṛṣṇa prepares the ground for his answer to Arjuna's third question—how does a *sthitaprajña* move about ? In order to move about unaffected by the objects of the senses, the first thing one should acquire is an awakened, unclouded, totally free *buddhi*, intellect. So in the next two

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8. विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः ।
रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते ॥
Gītā 2.59

9. यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः ।
इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ॥
Gītā 2.60

10. तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः ।
वशे हि यस्येन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥
Gītā 2.61

verses[11] Kṛṣṇa describes the chain reaction that leads to the clouding of *buddhi*. Instead of thinking of objects in a detached and discriminating manner people dwell only on their attractive and pleasurable qualities. By this uncontrolled thinking of the good points of objects they gradually develop an attachment for the enjoyment of those objects. Continued liking grows and matures into a strong desire to acquire and possess them. But it is not always easy to have what one desires, so any obstacle that comes in the way of that inordinate desire causes irritation, annoyance and anger. Once the people are overpowered by anger, their thinking faculty gets clouded. A person with a deluded brain loses the memory of all the wise teachings learnt from his parents and teachers and from his own past life. The loss of memory leads to the loss of will-power and self-control, and by acting impulsively, these people go to their moral ruin. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, he who is aware of his dignity and self-respect (*mān huńś*) is a man (*mānuṣ*); otherwise not. When delusion clouds a person's intelligence, then his humanity gets obliterated and he degenerates to the level of a beast.

This analysis of the fall of man is absolutely true and not mere philosophy. This is how ordinary beings lose their composure and destroy themselves spiritually. By contrast, a *sthitaprajña* does not allow such a chain reaction to take place within him; this is stated in the next verse.[12] He moves about freely among the objects of the world, unattached, self-possessed and serene.

If one has to turn off the faculties of thinking of and desiring things, then what is the difference between an aspirant of spiritual truth and a mad-man or idiot who does not think of such things? Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that instead of reducing yourself to insensibility or stupidity you should live in this world with your eyes and ears open, keeping every faculty with which God has endowed you at its highest peak, but see that in this process you do not allow your soul to be overpowered by *rāga-dveṣa*, attachment and aversion. You can have your ambitions and responsibilities, and can even enjoy the many objects of the world through the senses, but make your self-restraint so perfect that your mind remains free from likes and dislikes. The Gita tells you not to run away from this world giving the lame excuse of being spiritual. It requires only that whatever be your circumstances and actions, you have to remain absolutely self-possessed. A person who takes his stand on his own Self and keeps complete control over the functioning of the mind and the senses develops tremendous will-power. This sense of inner power gives him unshakable peace, tranquillity, serenity within himself. It is with this inner serenity that the *sthitaprajña* moves about in the world.

The effects of this inner serenity are discussed in the next verse.[13] This peace

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11. ध्यायतो विषयान्पुंसः संगस्तेषूपजायते ।
संगात्संजायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥
क्रोधाद्भवति संमोहः संमोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद्बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥

Gītā 2.62,63

12. रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।
आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति ॥

Gītā 2.64

13. प्रसादे सर्वदुःखानां हानिरस्योपजायते ।
प्रसन्नचेतसो ह्याशु बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठते ॥

Gītā 2.65

brings to an end all sorrows because in a person with a tranquil mind his intellect and will get quickly and firmly concentrated on the Atman. In fact this peace comes from within, from your own true Self which is *saccidānanda svarūpa.* The *sat svarūpa* is known to you because you always feel that you exist and no one can convince you do not exist. The *cit svarūpa* is awareness —awareness of yourself and of objects— which is also self-evident. Thus *sat* and *cit* represent the uninterrupted experience of your own being. The *ānanda svarūpa*, the peace, tranquillity and joy which is your true nature, is also very much there, only you have not learnt to discover it. It is only when the mind attains tranquillity, *prasāda*, that you come to know of it ; then your own nature of supreme bliss blossoms forth.

This *prasannatā* or serenity is not the joy which you get by possessing something you greatly desire. Introspective analysis shows that as soon as you possess the desired object, the desire disappears from the mind and for that fraction of a second you become desireless. Then the *ānanda svarūpa* of Atman has an opportunity to shine forth and you are extremely happy. All the time you wrongly think that the happiness has come from elsewhere, through the acquisition of some object, but the truth is that you have not acquired *ānanda*, you *are ānanda.* Swami Turiyananda used to tell the story of a pariah dog which got hold of a dry bone and started gnawing it so hard that its mouth started bleeding. It gained the impression that the bone was giving it pleasure, while in reality it was tasting only its own blood.

The importance of *niścayātmikā buddhi* is further stressed in the next verse.[14] *Niścayātmikā buddhi*, determined reason, is the will directed by reason and guided by wisdom gained through the understanding of life. A person who lacks determinate reason, not to speak of wisdom, cannot have any *bhāvanā* ; faith in the Divine who is identical with his own true Self. Such a person shifts his allegiance again and again and is unable to establish an unbroken communion with any particular ideal. He is always restless, and how can you expect a man who has no peace in his soul to have happiness, which is a manifestation of his own *ānanda svarūpa* ?

The danger in not keeping the mind under the control of *niścayātmikā buddhi* is stated in the next verse.[15] The mind is conjoined with the senses and, if it is not controlled by determined reason, it will follow their movements like an obedient servant. And since it is the characteristic of the senses to keep on wandering from one object of experience to another, such an uncontrolled mind is easily carried away by the senses causing it to lose its power of discrimination, *prajñā*—just as the stormy winds toss about a rudderless boat from one wave to another on the high seas and carry it out of its course.

Therefore, Kṛṣṇa continues in the next verse,[16] the senses must be completely restrained from their objects so that the reactions are allowed to come at will and in a manner determined by the enlightened *buddhi.* This is the self-discipline and penance, *sādhanā* and *tapasyā*, of a *sthitaprajña.* Through this self-culture he develops within him a spontaneity by

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14. नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना ।
न चाभावयत: शान्तिरशान्तस्य कुत: सुखम् ॥
Gītā 2.66

15. इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते ।
तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुर्नावमिवांभसि ॥
Gītā 2.67

16. तस्माद्यस्य महाबाहो निगृहीतानि सर्वश: ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥
Gītā 2.68

which his mind gets detached from sense objects and rests on the inner Self in a natural way.

The difference between the state of consciousness of the *sthitaprajña* and that of ordinary people is now taken up. In the next verse[17] Śrī Kṛṣṇa points out that ordinary people are always busy pursuing the fleeting pleasures of this world and so appear to be awake. But as a matter of fact they are caught in the net of maya, ignorance ; they are unaware of their true Self and Ultimate Reality ; they are asleep, that is, totally unconscious of the spiritual realm. But the self-controlled seer's eyes are fully open to the truths of the Spirit shut off from the common vision ; vice versa, the world of plurality which is the only reality for the ordinary man is just an illusion for the illumined soul who sees God alone everywhere.

Another implication in this context is that the functioning of the mind—stimulations of the senses by external objects, the transmission of these to the brain, the reference of these to the store-house of memories of past experiences, and the final judgement that this is so-and-so—this is the area which is absolutely dark for the generality of men. It is so spontaneous and natural that it produces little interest or enlightenment in them. Since their understanding has not penetrated to this area, it is like the dark night in which they are asleep, as it were. But the *saṁyamī* or self-disciplined and alert seer has a great interest in this field. He knows the entire mental mechanism, all the tricks of the mind ; so the depths of his mind are not unknown to him, not a dark night, nor is he asleep, for he can control the *vṛttis* or modifications of his mind as naturally or easily as the undisciplined are overpowered by them.

The state of consciousness of the illumined soul is discussed further in next verse.[18] The *saṁyamī* or *muni* is fully conscious of the dark corners of his mind and its spontaneous uncontrolled reactions, but he does not allow those reactions to come up without his sanction. The stimulations of the world do not make him lose his poise and tranquillity, just as the ocean remains undisturbed in spite of the inflow of waters from all sides. On the other hand, the *kāmakāmī*—one who cherishes desires for acquisition and possession and wanting things to happen according to his likes and dislikes—makes himself vulnerable to all kinds of external influences. A little disturbance here or there makes him lose his balance and get uprooted, as it were. So he who hankers after enjoyments can never be at peace. But he who has developed the capacity to absorb all desires without reacting, in whom all enjoyments merge themselves, attains the unshakable peace and stability of the sea.

Swami Saradananda (a great disciple of Sri Ramakrishna) was once asked by a young Swami, 'Sir, we are very much buffeted by desires and sometimes feel that we will disintegrate. You are also a human being and were once young, so please tell us what happens to you.' He replied, 'Dear child, when a storm strikes, it shakes trees violently, and uproots some of them. Similarly, those who are unprepared are overpowered by the passions. But I know

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17. या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।
यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥
Gītā 2.69

18. आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।
तद्वत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥
Gītā 2.70

right from the beginning that the storm is brewing and make myself ready to face it. It comes with terrible force, shakes my foundations and then passes away. I live like an eternal witness.' The storm of desires can never be avoided and will hit man. As the fire will never lose its capacity to burn, so will the world never lose its capacity to trouble man, because that is the nature of things. But the illumined sage is always able to control the interactions between the senses and sense-objects, and the spontaneous reactions of the mind to the stimulations of the world. As a result he lives in unshaken peace of mind; nothing in the world can disturb him.

The *sthitaprajña* does not have to protect himself by remaining secluded. Rather, he moves about freely in the world. What gives him this freedom? Kṛṣṇa answers in the next verse.[19] True freedom is inner freedom, freedom from instinctual drives. The most important of these are three: *kāma* (desire to acquire), *mamatā* (attachment to something already acquired) and *ahaṁkāra* (egoism). It is not so much a question of throwing these out as of sublimating them.

Kāma arises only when a person feels that he is insufficient and incomplete. To hide his sense of incompleteness he may give a galaxy of reasons justifying his demands. But once he gains the realization that the whole world is nothing but himself, then, if he finds another enjoying something which he himself does not have, he will say, 'I am enjoying through that person and so do not need it for myself'. When Sri Ramakrishna was suffering from throat cancer his disciples urged him to request the Divine Mother to cure the disease so that he might eat. Though he was always merged in the Absolute, the Master could not resist their entreaties, and prayed to the Divine Mother. Then, coming out of his samādhi, he told them, 'I will never again listen to you. The Divine Mother asked me, "Are you not eating through all the millions of mouths in the universe ?"' This anecdote illustrates how personal wants and desires lose their hold on the man of transcendental wisdom.

Mamatā is attachment to a limited circle of relatives and friends created by emotional ties. The death of a stranger on the roadside moves you only to a momentary pity, but the death of a near and dear one leaves you inconsolable.

Ahaṁkāra or egoism is the sense of 'I' as a limited entity. This self-limitation itself is the greatest bondage. The man of stable wisdom identifies himself not with his ego but with the cosmic Self. He thus becomes free inwardly and so can move about fearlessly immersed in peace and serenity.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa brings to a conclusion his description of the inner life and outer behaviour of a *sthitaprajña* in the last verse of the second chapter of the Gita.[20] O Pārtha, the *sthitaprjña* attains the state of existence called *brāhmī-sthiti,* in which his self remains immersed in the consciousness of the Absolute. Once he has attained it he is deluded no more by maya, that is, the world-appearance does not veil the Reality of Brahman from him, nor does he have to remind himself all the time that he is the Atman. As when a child is once told by his parents that this is so-and-so the knowledge lasts for his whole life, so

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19. विहाय कामान्यः सर्वान्पुमांश्चरति निःस्पृहः ।
निर्ममो निरहंकारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ।।
Gītā 2.71

20. एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य
विमुह्यति ।
स्थित्वाऽस्यामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ।।
Gītā 2.72

if once the man of mature and stable wisdom has a taste of the infinite glory of Brahman, his own *saccidānanda svarūpa*, that is enough for his lifetime. It will never diminish nor will he forget it, and even at the point of death when all control over his faculties has withered away, this awareness will enable him to shake off every trace of earthly bondage and attain supreme, everlasting beatitude.

Conclusion

In the *Bhagavad-Gītā-Upaniṣad* the second discourse contains the essence of the entire teaching given by God in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna, the individual soul. The warrior had to face the crisis of total confusion of mind and despondency on the battlefield because he had lost his sense of identity with his true original Self and had identified himself with his physical frame and his feelings. He can get out of the crisis only by recovering his balance through the realization of his true nature of the Atman. That is why Śrī Kṛṣṇa first gave a lengthy discourse on the transcendence and immutability of the Atman.

Since Arjuna was not immediately prepared to live up to this Vedantic truth, Śrī Kṛṣṇa had to take the lower point of view of reminding him of the obligation to perform his own duty. From there he took Arjuna one step further by asking him to convert his duty into a spiritual discipline. Starting from the point where man could only follow his own desires, Śrī Kṛṣṇa guided Arjuna through the path of desireless action, up to the point where Arjuna could grasp the highest teaching of non-dnalism and to qualify for liberation.

Lastly, he placed the ideal of the *sthitaprajña* before Arjuna. Generally men lose their balance because they get attached to and desire the worldly objects which stimulate their senses. The remedy for this is not to run away from this world, as Arjuna had proposed to do. All that he has to do is to take his stand on his own transcendent Self and make use of his faculties as instruments of the Self for the attainment of freedom. The Self-realized man of steady wisdom discharges the duties of life without losing his balance under the stress and strain of his life on earth, and attains identity with Brahman at the end of life.

Thus God gives the clarion call to man to live and act in this world practising *buddhi yoga*, the yoga of action guided by the knowledge of an awakened *buddhi*, intellect. Through that he will not only find the solution of his problems of sorrow, suffering and delusion in the world, but will also liberate himself from the bondage of repeated birth and death by realizing his own true original nature as Atman-Brahman, absolute Being-Awareness-Bliss.

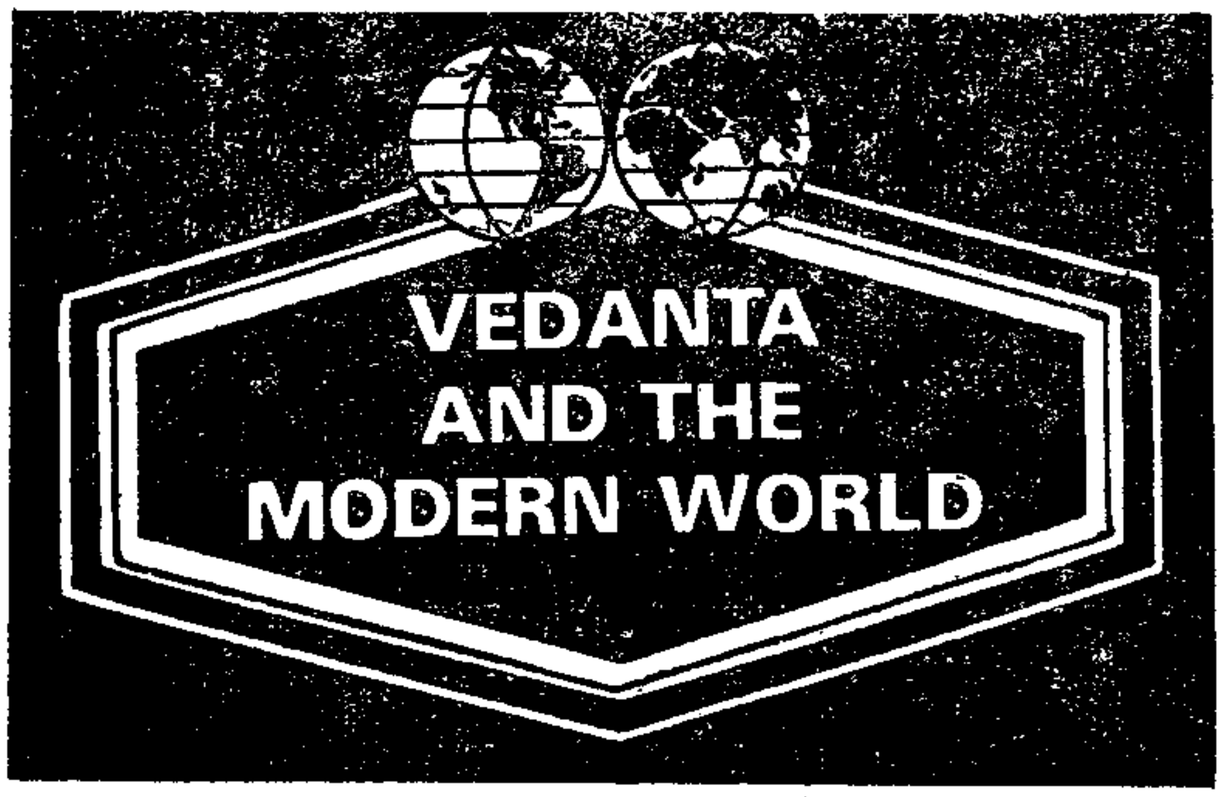
(Concluded)

(Continued from page 283)

mistakes will be eliminated in the future editions of the book. The book is enriched by 47 plates of various deities. They are mainly procured from Khajuraho and the Heras Institute, Bombay.

The work deserves an important place in the study room of all students and scholars of Indian religion and philosophy. Libraries must procure a copy of this publication at the earliest convenience.

S. P. DUBEY M. A. (PHIL.) M. A. (REL.) PH. D
Reader, Dept. of Postgraduate Studies and Research in Philosophy, Rani Durgawati University, Jabalpur.
(Joint Secretary, Indian Philosophical Congress)



MATTER AND CONSCIOUSNESS : CHANGING PERSPECTIVES IN MODERN PHYSICS

SWAMI JITATMANANDA

Hardly had the young Israeli psychic Uri Geller placed his hands over a rosebud for a quarter of a minute, when its petals unfolded spontaneously to form a beautiful flower. Connie Best, author of an article on Uri Geller, wrote:

> Physics is precise unbending... Uri Geller is bending 'physics', forcing it to take account of the socalled paranormal powers of the mind. How much will physics have to change ? If the readings on meters reflect the wishes of lab-assistants, if the presence of an experimenter is enough to embarrass sub-atomic particles, how are we to know where we stand ?[1]

Even without Uri Geller's miraculous feats, physics today, by the very pressure of its new discoveries, has stumbled upon these questions: Is matter related to consciousness in any way ? Is the so-called matter backed by some organic consciousness behind it ? If so, how ? Such questions are leading physicists to strange conclusions some of which are mystic in nature. Jeremy Bernstein, the celebrated particle physicist, fears that such relation of physics to mysticism might eventually lead to the 'obsolescence' of physical sciences. That is the last thing he would do, he asserted.[2] Nevertheless, physics since the 1920s has opened up these frightening (or enlightening ?) prospects to us.

Max Born's 'Probability Waves'

Two physicists, de Broglie and Erwin Schrödinger, showed in 1924-25 that electron behave like waves of matter. Max Born went deeper and realized that these electron waves have no similarity with any kind of material waves like the ocean wave. He statistically interpreted that they were waves of probability of finding particles at a specific point.

What are these probability waves ? They are absolutely unlike any probability function we know in classical physics. If a man has a house with a front door and a back door, and if the probability of his going out of the house everyday by the front door is P1 and the probability of going out of the house everyday by the back door is P2, then the total probability of the man's going out of his house everyday is P1+P2. But this simple addition of probabilities is *not* valid in quantum theory. 'Probabilities in quantum theory have no classical analogue, because they are simply linearly additive ; *they are non-linear*', writes Heinz Pagels.[3] What is this non-linear probability ?

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1. Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird, *The Secret Life of Plants* (London: Allan Lane, 1974) p. 309

2. *Quantum Questions*, Ed. Ken Wilber. (New York: Shambhala, 1984) Preface.

3. Heinz Pagels, *The Cosmic Code* (New York: Bantam New Age Book, 1983) p. 115

This question leads us into a more complicated world. In a popular lecture sponsored by the B.B.C. in 1950 physicist Richard Feynman tried to explain the concept of non-linear, non-classical probability through a set of three bouble-slit experiments.[4]

A. In the first experiment bullets are fired from a definite source (machine gun) at a target wall with two holes in it and a detection screen behind the target wall.

Now if the probability of the bullets passing through hole 1 is B1 and that of passing through hole 2 is B2, then the total probability of bullets passing through these holes and being spotted on the detection screen behind is B1+B2.

B. In the second experiment the object fired is not bullets but water waves. The source is a paddle wheel in water which generates waves that hit the wall with two holes. For the detector behind Feynman used a screen made of cork bobs. The number of times the cork bob jumps up determines the number of water waves on the detection screen. If we close the first hole, we get a probability of waves passing through the second hole to the screen as W2. If we close the second hole, the probability of waves passing through the first hole to the screen, similarly, is W1. But when both the holes are open, the picture is totally different from that of the bullet pattern. The total probability of the waves reaching the screen when both the holes are open is not a simple sum like B1+B2. W1+W2 is a strange number. In this experiment waves from hole 1 interfere with waves from hole 2. This action of 'interference' happens only when something moves as waves, and not as particles. Bullets, obviously, do not have interference as the waves have. And because of the interference of some of the waves on some other waves, they either cancel each other or enhance each other. In accordance with the super-position principle, waves interfere either destructively or constructively. As a result of this interference, the total probability of waves going through the wholes can either be greater than B1+B2 or less than B1+B2 of the bullet pattern.

C. In the third experiment, according to Feynman's arrangements, instead of bullets, electrons are fired from the same spot. The source this time is a hot tungsten filament that boils off electrons. The barrier this time is a thin metal with two holes, and the screen is an electron-detector. Now, Einstein's theory of photo-electric effect conceives that electrons move as particles. Electrons do behave as particles and their charge, mass, and the spin can all be measured; they also leave tracks in a Wilson cloud chamber. In Feynman's third experiment electrons are fired as particles (almost exactly like the bullets of the first experiment) and also detected as particles on the detection screen. Such being the case, the probability distribution of the electrons detected on the detection screen should have been like the probability distribution (B1+B2) of bullets fired from the machine gun, that is, it should have been E1+E2. But it is not! On the contrary, the final distribution of electrons is like that of the water waves—W1+W2. What happened to the electrons? Did they not start as particles from the source? Yes, they did. Did they not hit the detection screen as particles? Yes, they did. They both started from the source and reached the target as particles. But? And this 'but' is the most 'weird' thing in the quantum world. But, in between the source and the target, they behaved and moved as waves. (Through his Electron diffraction experiment Broglie had already shown that electrons could also move as

4. Ibid, pp. 115-16

waves.) These electrons moved in between as waves and they interfered with each other as waves, thereby either nullifying or enhancing the intensity of electron waves. When we look at electrons either at the source or at the target, they behave obediently as particles ; but when we try to see them during the passage, we are simply unable to see this movement. That is why Einstein likened sub-atomic phenomena to the movements inside an unopenable watch. Do electrons behave like truant children who behave according to their own sweet will when their mothers are not watching their movements ? A child behaves freely according to its own choice because it is a conscious and organic entity, not a dead and insentient object. Who gave the electrons this liberty, which is the prerogative of only conscious and living beings ?

'That is rather weird', writes Pagels,[5] 'and no ordinary idea of objectivity can accommodate it.' This is something quite different from classical probability. 'Probability-waves', as Niels Bohr and two of his colleagues H.A. Kramers and John Slater suggested, and which was applied to quantum phenomena by Max Born, was an entirely new idea. Heisenberg explained this new probability in the following way: 'It meant a tendency for something. It was a quantitative version of the old concept of "potentia" in Aristotelian philosophy. It introduced something standing in the middle between the idea of an event and the actual event, a strange kind of physical reality just in the middle between possibility and reality.'[6]

The new concept of 'probability-waves' confirms the fundamental unpredictability and the weirdness of the sub-atomic world. This is a weirdness which has led to the idea that matter may be conscious! 'Physicists found themselves dealing with energy', writes Gary Zukov in his very popular book *The Dancing Wu Li Masters,* 'that somehow possessed information (which made it organic), and unaccountably presented itself in patterns (waves). In short, physicists found themselves dealing with Wu-Li patterns of organic energy.'[7]

Quantum mechanical tunnelling

In the practical field Born's concept of probability waves has been applied to a particular phenomenon known as 'quantum mechanical tunnelling'. This is one of the strangest phenomena in today's physics. Sub-atomic or atomic particles *can* and *do* pass right through a solid barrier, say a granite wall or hill ; whereas a bullet or a baseball cannot. This pathless tunnelling of quantum particles through solid barriers has been explained on the basis of the 'probability wave' behaviour of electrons.

Let us suppose one electron is going to tunnel right through a big granite wall. Schrodinger's wave equation shows that the electron's wave nature in front of the barrier has a little bit of the wave leaking outside the barrier. This implies that the electron has a certain probability of appearing outside the barrier like stepping over a bar by a horse or like a bird just flying over a high wall. And this is what is known as 'quantum mechanical tunnelling' through a solid barrier.[8]

Technology and applied physics have made use of this process in many practical devices like transistors, tunnel diodes, and other electronic equipments including the digital watch on our hands. It has also explained the phenomenon of nuclear radioactivity in which the atomic nucleus

5. Ibid, p. 122
6. Gary Zukov, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1979) p. 90
7. Ibid, p. 90
8. Pagels, *Cosmic Code,* p. 123

spontaneously emits particles. The nucleus actually acts like a barrier to the particles that it eventually emits. However, there is always a small probability that a particle can tunnel in the style of Max Born's probability wave through the strong nuclear barrier and escape. This sudden escape of a sub-nuclear particle through the nuclear barrier is known as radio-activity.

Physicists today are speculating on this strange, unpredictable and almost conscious or organic behaviour of quantum particles. A huge train can move only along the rail-tracks but a worm crawling on the track has got the judgement, resilience and power and free-will to divert its own course from the rail-track and save its life, because it is conscious. Could we assume that electrons too behave as a conscious organism ? At least the quantum mechanical process gives evidence in favour of such an assumption.

The 'probability wave' theory has also raised new questions about the strange behaviour of light particles or photons as they are called. Long ago, in 1803, physicist Thomas Young made the celebrated double-slit experiment of light. In this experiment light rays passing through two holes interfered with each other (as waves) creating alternating bands of white and dark strands. The experiment confirmed the movement of light as waves. However, at the turn of this century Max Plank's theorizing on black body radiation and Einstein's theory of photo-electric effect, showed tbat light also moves as particles known as photons.

Today when physicists try to explain the result of the double-slit experiment of Young, taking for granted that light behaves as particles, they are confronted with a similar problem! Photons behave unpredictably like the 'conscious' electrons of Feynman's two-hole experiment. Where is exactly the problem ? Feynman's third double-slit experiment when done with photons as particles gives the same result. The photons which enter by first hole when the second hole is closed, do *not* enter by the same first hole when the second hole is open. What happened to the photons which originally entered by the first hole ? How could they know that they 'should not' enter the first hole when the second hole is open ? Why do the photons behave in this way when the two holes are open ? How do they know when to enter and when not to ?

Henry Stapp, one of the leading American physicists of today, writes on this mysterious photon behaviour: 'The central mystery of quantum theory' is 'how does information get round so quick ? How does the particle (photon) know that there are two slits ?'[9]

Another physicist of today E.H. Walker openly speculates that the photons may be *conscious*. According to him 'Consciousness may be associted with all quantum mechanical processes... the universe is inhabited by an almost unlimited number of rather discrete, conscious, usually non-thinking entities that are responsible for the detailed working of the universe.'[10]

Physicist Jack Sarfatti writes: 'I suspect that general relativity and quantum theory are simply two complementary aspects of a deeper theory that will involve a kind of cosmic consciousness as the key concept'.[11] This 'cosmic consciousness', or the *mahat* of India's Sāṁkhya philosophy, is the basis of entire creation. Commenting on Wheeler's concept of super-space and Jack Sarfatti's own interpretation of Unified Field Theory, Michael Talbot writes in his book *Mysticism and New*

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9. Gary Zukov, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*, p. 87
10. Ibid, p. 88
11. Michael Talbot, *Mysticism and New Physics* (New York: Bantam Books, 1980) p. 82

Physics: 'Mind and matter are different vibrations or ripples in the same pond.' He also thinks that 'the fields which govern consciousness (mind) and those which govern matter' are 'part of a continuum, a spectrum of fields within fields.'[12]

Physics has stepped almost into the world of Vedanta. From the idea of light waves moving in ether to the concept of conscious photons is a tremendous breakthrough for physics. It is the first step to the Vedantic view of the world—'All that exist is Brahman', existence-knowledge-bliss Absolute. And this Absolute lies beyond all sensory perceptions. Modern physics shows repeatedly that sensory perception fails to enter the depths of matter. No one has seen an electron even once, not to speak of twice, said Schrödinger. Physicists who refused to accept non-sensory data as proof of something existing somewhere were forced to accept the presence of sub-atomic reality which is absolutely above all sense perceptions. The empiricist Mach did not accept atoms because he never saw one. But the limitations of sensory perception soon came to be accepted as an undeniable fact.

Does matter end in matter ?

Some physicist are today trying to reach the material rock-bottom of matter. Behind the so-called mass of matter physicists discovered molecules ; behind molecules, atoms ; behind the atoms, electrons moving round a nucleus. When electron was finally found unknowable by any experiment (according to Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle) physicists turned their attention to the nucleus. The nucleus was broken. Within the nucleus they found protons, neutrons, mesons, leptons, hadrons and hundreds of tiny sub-atomic particles which live only 2 to 3 particle-seconds. (A particle-second is 10^{-23} second). The search continued. It was soon found that these sub-atomic particles are really not particles but objects or events in the various processes of sub-atomic phenomena, as Fritjof Capra explains it.[13] Nevertheless, scientists persevered on. Today some of them imagine that the hadrons in the nucleus are composed of six types of 'quarks'—bottom, top, charmed, etc. And all these 'quarks' are permanently confined inside the hadrons, they postulate. To deal with these hypothetical quark theory they have even developed a new line of research in physics which is known as Quantum Chrotomo dynamics. But the real nature of quarks eludes scientists even today. The search for quarks was thwarted when the quark theory posed some fundamental questions.[14]

Are quarks the rock-bottom of matter ? Doubtful. 'Since quarks are apparently confined permanently inside hadrons, does it make sense to talk about their having parts ?' asks Pagels. And Nobel-physicist Sheldon Glashaw writes :

> If this interpretation of quark confinement is correct, it suggests an ingenius way to terminate the apparently infinite regression of finer structure in matter. Atoms can be analysed into electrons and nuclei, nuclei into protons and neutrons, and protons and neutrons into quarks, but the theory of quark confinement suggests that the theory stops there. It is difficult to imagine how a particle could have internal structure if the particle cannot ever be created.[15]

Matter and the field of energy

'Before the advent of the quantum theory physicists thought of particles and fields

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12. Ibid, p. 122

13. Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics* (New York : Shambhala, 1973) p. 284
14. *Cosmic Code*, p. 210
15. Ibid, p. 210

as distinct entities. For example, the electron and proton making up the hydrogen atom were understood as particles bound together by the electric field of mutual attraction. Particles were considered to be immutable and eternal', writes Pagels.[16] As Nobel Physicist Steven Weinberg has put it, 'Material particles like electrons and protons were conceived to be eternal....On the other hand, photons were supposed to be merely a manifestation of an underlying reality, the quantified electromagnetic field, and could be freely created and destroyed'.[17]

But the unification of field and matter came soon. Weinberg continues:

> The essential steps were taken by Jordan and Eugene Wigner in their paper of 1928, and by Heisenberg and Pauli in their long papers of 1929-30 on this subject. Material particles emerged as only packets of energy, as the quanta of various fields. Thus the inhabitants of the universe were conceived to be a set of fields—an electron field, a proton field, an electromagnetic field—and particles were reduced to mere epiphenomena. In its essentials, this point of view has survived to the present day, and forms the central dogma of quantum field theory: *the essential reality is a set of fields* subject to the rules of special relativity and quantum mechanics; all else is derived as a consequence of the quantum dynamics of those fields.[18]

Nearly three quarters of a century earlier, Vivekananda had anticipated this very idea when he said in London in 1895, '...it is possible to demonstrate that what we call matter does not exist at all. It is only a certain state of force. Solidity, hardness or any other state of matter can be proved to be the result of motion.'[19]

Matter is like 'quantum foam', says today's celebrated American physicist John F. Wheeler. What is quantum foam? Matter floats like 'foam' as 'quanta of energy' on the surface of an underlying ocean of the cosmic energy from which all the five kinds of energies have been born. 'Wheeler's proposed picture of space', writes Talbot, 'as composed of microscopic bubbles foaming, can be conceptualised as a carpet of foam'.[20] Physicist Jack Sarfatti writes, 'Matter is nothing but gravitationally trapped light... The turbulent sea of space of Wheeler's quantum geometrodynamics is simply the trapping and untrapping of photons and netrinos in a continual process. On this primordial level it is impossible to differentiate among light, matter, and empty space.'[21]

Matter, therefore, floats like foam on the surface of an infinite ocean of energy which obviously is an expression of an underlying consciousness. We have, while discussing physics, arrived at a Vedantic idea expressed in the medieval Indian treatise *Dṛg-dṛśya Viveka*:

> Creation is the appearance of name and form on the infinite Brahman, which is of the nature of Absolute Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, like foams on the surface of an ocean.[22]

So, behind all matter is only a 'quantised field of energy which could be freely created and destroyed'. It is Śiva's continuous dance going on, as Fritjof Capra has so beautifully described in his best selling book *The Tao of Physics*.

Vivekananda's concept of ākāśa and prāṇa

Energy (*Śakti*) and Consciousness (*Cit*) are one: this is the basic finding of

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16. Ibid, p. 238
17. Ibid, p. 239
18. Ibid, p. 239
19. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1976) Vol. 2, p. 76
20. *Mysticism and New Physics*, p. 188
21. Ibid, p. 120
22. सृष्टिर्नाम ब्रह्मरूपे सच्चिदानन्दवस्तुनि ।
अब्धौ फेनादिवत् सर्वनामरूपप्रसरणम् ॥
Dṛg-Dṛsya Viveka, 14

Vedanta. Sri Ramakrishna asks: Can you separate a snake from its wriggling motion? Can you separate ripples from the ocean surface? Can you separate the fire from its burning power? You can't. Neither can you, Sri Ramakrishna concludes, separate Brahman and Śakti.

Vivekananda arrived at the same conclusion following a different way. Can there be will if there is no consciousness? The German philosopher Schopenhauer (1788-1860) tried to establish the primacy of will and to make consciousness its derivative. Vivekananda exploded the Schopenhauerian concept of a 'blind will', and showed the primacy of consciousness. Energy is the expression of will and willing comes only when there is a consciousness behind it. Let us listen to Vivekananda and see for ourselves that his words and ideas are essentially not different from those of Steven Weinberg just quoted.

> The whole universe is one ocean of matter, and you are the name of a little particle, and I of another, and the sun of another. We know that this matter is continuously changing. What is forming the sun one day, the next day may form the matter of our bodies.[23]
>
> Of the one huge mass of matter, one point is called a moon, another a sun, another a man, another the earth, another a plant, another a mineral. Not one is constant, but everything is changing, matter eternally concreting and disintegrating. So it is with the mind. Matter is represented by the ether; when the action of Prana is most subtle, this very ether, in the finer state of vibration, will represent the mind, and there it will be still one unbroken mass. If you can simply get to that subtle vibration, you will see and feel that the whole universe is composed of subtle vibrations.[24]
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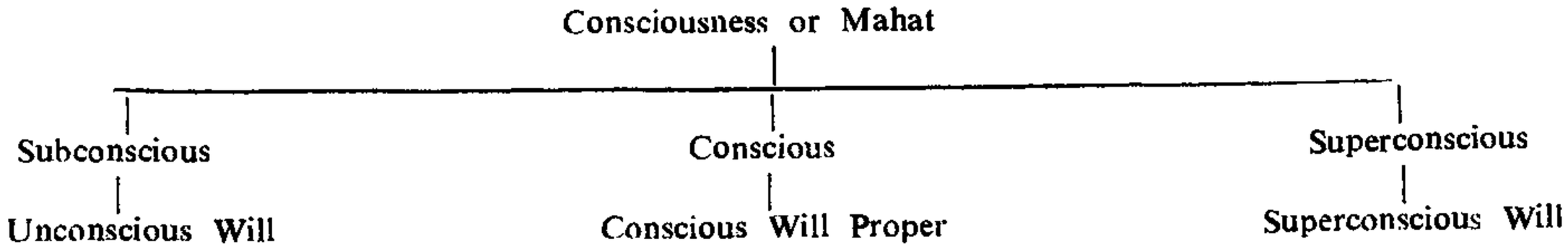
> But the one idea is here that it is from the finer that the grosser has come. Gross matter is the last to emerge and the most external, and this gross matter had the finer matter before it. Yet we see that the whole thing has been resolved into two, but there is not yet a final unity. There is the unity of force, Prana; there is the unity of matter, called Akasha. Is there any unity to be found among them again? Can they be melted into one? Our modern science is mute here, it has not yet found its way out; and if it is doing so, just as it has been slowly finding the same old Prana and the same ancient Akasha, it will have to move along the same lines.
>
> The next unity is the omnipresent impersonal Being known by its old mythological name as Brahmā, [not to be confused with Brahman, the impersonal Absolute of Vedanta]...and psychologically called Mahat. This is where the two unite.[25]
>
> Mind, intelligence, will and everything else is insentient. But they are all reflecting the sentiency. The 'Chit' of some being who is beyond all this, whom the Sankhya philosophers call 'Purusha'... It is said that the will of the Lord created the universe. It is very good as a common expression, but we see it cannot be true. How could it be will? Will is the third or fourth manifestation in nature. Many things exist before it, and *what created them*?... It (the Purusha) is neither intelligence nor will, but it is the cause of all these. It is its (Purusha's) presence that sets them all going and combining.[26]

But evolution must be brought in accordance with the more exact science of physics, which can demonstrate that every evolution must be preceded by an involution. This being so, the evolution of the *Vasana* or will must be preceded by the involution of the *Mahat* or cosmic consciousness.



23. *Complete Works* (1977) 1.256
24. *Complete Works* (1977) 1.151
25. *Complete Works* (1973) 3.400-401
26. *Complete Works* (1976) 2.450-51

There is no willing without knowing. How can we desire unless we know the object of desire ?[27]

There is but One, seen by the ignorant as matter, by the wise as God. And the history of civilisation is the progressive reading of spirit into matter. The ignorant see the person in the non-person. The sage sees the non-person in the person.[28]

Physics turns to consciousness behind matter

Today's physicists are slowly realizing the truths behind the ancient Vedantic concepts of Ākāśa (matter), Prāṇa (Force) and Mahat (Cosmic consciousness). Michael Talbot writes: 'In essence, the theory of the akasa is identical with Wheeler's quantum foam. Matter is vibration in the akasa. Matter is undulations in the quantum foam.'[29] He continues, 'All things are interconnected. Assertions by George Berkeley and Alfred North Whitehead that consciousness and the physical world are connected gain new significance in the light of Wheeler's proposition'.[30] Talbot finally accepts the Upaniṣadic idea to explain the unity of matter and consciousness. 'Matter is condensed energy, but it is the condensed energy of Chit, or consciousness itself. As it is written in the Mundaka Upanisad, "By energism Consciousness (Brahman or the unbroken Ultimate Reality) is massed ; from that Matter is born and from Matter, Life and Mind and the worlds" '.[31] Finally Talbot sums up this reduction of matter into consciousness:

> Most importantly, the new physics is offering us a scientific basis for religion. This is something new in the history of Western civilization, and its impact will certainly be felt in every aspect of our lives. But a word of caution: the religion offered by the new physics is not a religion of values or absolute principles. It offers us no strict delineation of heavens or hells. It is a religion based on the psychology of the human consciousness—indeed, on the psychology of the entire universe as a conscious force acting upon itself. In this new religion we will not find the rules of the game so long sought after by philosophers and theologians. What we will find is a glimpse into ourselves, a bit of cosmic hide-and-seek in which we realize that no rules as such can be found. We make the rules. We play the game.[32]

The function of the new physicists today, says Talbot, is to 'examine the game itself—the new cosmology suggested by the convergence of mysticism and the new physics.'[33] The new physics, in fact, is converging to the central Vedantic conclusion, to put in the words of Vivekananda—'Spirit (consciousness), mind and matter are one—one existence appearing as variations.'

This reminds us of the oft-quoted statement of Schrödinger:

> Consciousness is never experienced in the plural, only in the singular. How does the idea of plurality (so emphatically opposed by the Upanishad writers) arise at all ?... Much sillier questions have been asked: Do animals have souls ? It has even been questioned whether women, or only men, have souls... The only possible alternative is simply to keep to the immediate experience that consciousness is a singular of which the plural is unknown ; that there *is* only one thing and that, what seems to be plurality, is merely a series of different aspects of this one thing, produced by a deception (the Indian Maya).[34]

Ken Wilber in his latest book *Quantum Questions* discusses in detail the five *kośas* or sheaths of the human personality which was first enunciated thousands of years ago

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27. *Complete Works* (1977) 8.363
28. *Complete Works* (1977) 8.429
29. *Mysticism and New Physics*, p. 118
30. Ibid, p. 81
31. Ibid, p. 143
32. Ibid, p. 161
33. Ibid, p. 161
34. Quoted in *Quantum Questions*, p. 93

in the *Taittirīya Upanisad*. According to the Upaniṣadic sages, the human personality consists of five layers or sheaths enclosing the innermost Self or Atman. These five sheaths are: 1. The Physical body (*annamaya kośa*), 2. Vital body (*prāṇamaya kośa*), 3. Mental body (*manomaya kośa*), 4. Intellectual body (*vijñānamaya kośa*), 5. Blissful body (*ānandamaya kośa*). Behind all these five layers of our existence lies the one pure, contentless, self-luminous Atman. Ken Wilber corresponds each layer of our body to one level of our knowledge or knowing.

Physical body—matter—physics
Vital body—life or breath or prana—biology
Mental body—mind—psychology
Intellectual body—soul—theology
Blissful or spiritual body—spirit—mysticism.[35]

Inanimate objects like stones and rocks which do not reproduce, manifest only the lower or outermost layer called physical body. In ordinary living organisms like plants and animals we find the manifestations of the vital body and the physical body. Man, the highest of all living beings, manifests or can manifest the power of all the different levels of existence. 'The highest level does not violate the principles of the lower. It simply is not exclusively bound or is explainable by them', writes Ken Wilber.

The higher transcends but includes the lower and not vice-versa. Thus life transcends but includes matter; mind transcends but includes life; soul transcends but includes mind; and spirit transcends but includes soul. At that point, however, asymptotic at infinity, we have reached a paradoxical limit; spirit is that which transcends everything *and* includes everything. Or, in traditional terms, spirit is both completely transcendent to the world and completely immanent in the world—and this is the most notorious (and unavoidable) paradox of spirit.[36]

35. *Quantum Questions*, p. 16
36. Ibid.

Some physicists are studying the entire creation today as an expression of broken symmetry from the state of an unbroken and perfect symmetry at the beginning of creation. Heinz Pagels writes, 'The universe from its very beginning to the present may be viewed as a hierarchy of successively broken symmetries—a transition from a simple perfect symmetry at the beginning of time to the complex patterns of broken symmetries we see today.'[37]

Since it is the One Substance which manifests as different levels of reality (according to *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*) mind and matter are created from the same substance. Vivekananda interprets this as follows:

Mind at a very low rate of vibration is what is known as matter. Matter at a high rate of vibration is what is known as mind. Both are the same substance; and therefore, as matter is bound by time and space and causation, mind which is matter at a high rate of vibration is bound by the same law.[38]

Vivekananda's interpretation of Vedanta anticipated this idea of one perfect symmetry breaking down into imperfect symmetries in the universe.

Nature (in its original form) is homogeneous (a state of perfect symmetry). Differentiation is in manifestation. The Sanskrit word for nature is Prakriti, (the difference due to breaking down of that perfect symmetry) and means literally differentiation (*pra*—divergent, *krti*—creation). All is one substance, but it is manifested variously.[39]

This one substance, according to Vedanta is the *akhaṇḍa cit*, Unbroken, Undifferentiated Consciousness.

37. *Cosmic Code*, p. 233
38. *Complete Works* (1978) 6.34
39. Ibid, p. 34. Words within brackets not in the original.

Where do we stand now ?

We began with Jeremy Bernstein's fear that the convergence of physics and mysticism (or more strictly Vedantic mysticism) might lead to the eventual obsolescence of physics. Fortunately until now physics has only been more enriched and fulfilled by the incorporation of quantum-mystical ideas or the 'atomysticism' of Sommerfield. Nobel-prize winning physicist Eugene Wigner welcomes this convergence of physics and mysticism as only a 'higher understanding'. In 1964 he remarked that 'there are many signs... that a more profound understanding' of observation and cognition 'is a not too distant future step.' He continues: 'At any rate it should be next decisive breakthrough toward a more integrated understanding of the world, after which we shall not have to treat physical phenomena and phenomena of the mind in such a way that we forget about the tools used for the consideration of one when thinking about the problems of the other.'

That this 'higher integration' could not be achieved at that time (1964) Wigner imputed to the fact that 'psychology is not yet ready for providing concepts and idealizations of such precision as is expected in mathematics or even physics'.[40]

Vivekananda had spoken nearly a century earlier in 1895-96 in the course of his lectures in Europe and America about the inadequacy of western psychology:

> In the West, the powers of the mind, especially unusual powers, are looked upon as bordering on witchcraft and mysticism....
>
> Physicists obtain pretty much the same results the world over. They do not differ in their general facts, nor in the results which naturally follow from such facts. This is because the data of physical science are obtainable by all and are universally recognised, and the results are logical conclusions based upon these universally recognised facts. In the realm of mind, it is different. Here there are no data, no facts observable by the physical senses, and no universally recognised materials therefore, from which to build a system of psychology after their being equally experimented upon by all who study the mind.
>
> ... Psychology is the science of sciences; but in the West it is placed upon the same plane as all other sciences; that is, it is judged by the same criterion—utility.
>
> ... Only the smallest fraction of our scientific knowledge can have any such practical application to our daily lives. This is so because only an infinitely small percentage of our conscious mind is on the sensuous plane. We have just a little bit of sensuous consciousness and imagine that to be our entire mind and life; but, as a matter of fact, it is but a drop in the mighty ocean of subconscious mind.[41]

While western psychology has thought of only two layers of our consciousness--the conscious and the unconscious (or, before Freud, the subconscious) Yoga-Vedanta psychology discussed even in very ancient days that our consciousness has got three layers—the unconscious, the conscious and the superconscious. It is in the last, the superconscious level, that we realize that the universe is a creation from the one unbroken Consciousness or Akhaṇḍa Cit. Today's new psychology, the 'transpersonal psychology' advanced by Abraham Maslow, Stanislov Grof and others, has already incorporated this higher consciousness which brings us the realization of 'harmony'—absolute homogeneity of the universe.

Conclusion

Today western psychology and philosophy based on a Cartesian tradition of

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40. *Handbook of Parapsychology*. Ed. by Benjamin B. Wolman (New York: Nostrand Reinholt Co., 1977) p. 741

41. *Complete Works* (1978) 6.30-31. 28

strict division between mind and matter has been finally rejected by quantum physicists as illogical. A.D. Reincourt calls it a 'schizophrenic division' which is responsible, in the western thinking, for the separatism between microcosm and macrocosm, mind and matter, man and the Ultimate Reality. Many scientists like Schrödinger, Fritjof Capra and others admit that it is in the mystical tradition of the Upaniṣads that such a higher understanding is found. B.W. Wolman in his monumental book *Handbook of Para-Psychology* writes:

> It happens, however, that the 'number systems' in Eastern mystical philosophy, especially the Upanishads (with some confirmation by western psychology and direct mystical testimonies), provide a basis of 'precision', in such close correspondence with formulations of quantum theory that there is an obvious invitation to exhibit the two (matter and consciousness) as aspects of an 'integrated understanding of the world.'[42]

Physics has already come a long way. The distinction between matter and consciousness is not only not rigid today but is on the verge of extinction! Nichola Tesla, one of the most eminent physicists of 19th-century America, who came into close contact with Vivekananda and was impressed by his ideas on *ākāśa* and *prāṇa*, predicted: 'The day science begins to study non-physical phenomena, it will make more progress in one decade than in all the previous centuries of its existence.'[43] This prediction has come to be true and that decade is knocking at our door.

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42. *Handbook of Parapsychology*, p. 741
43. Quoted in *Secret Life of Plants*, p. 309

KNOWLEDGE COMES, BUT WISDOM LINGERS

PROF. SAMARENDRA KRISHNA BOSE

The caption—a line from Tennyson's famous poem, 'Locksley Hall'—describes the character of the present age perhaps more aptly than any other single line does. It focuses our attention on the fundamental difference, so often unjustly ignored, between knowledge and wisdom.

Our age is undoubtedly an age of knowledge, an age of exploration and researches into different fields of science and art. The progress acheived in various departments of natural sciences and technology, as well as in diverse branches of humanities, is astounding. But in spite of so much advancement in all these fields of knowledge, wisdom seems to lag behind. Paradoxical as it may sound, it may be safely asserted that as knowledge proceeds onward, wisdom recedes further and further.

What is wisdom, then? It is hard, if not impossible, to give a precise definition of wisdom. Even the Concise Oxford Dictionary's definition of wisdom as 'possession of experience and knowledge together with the power of applying them critically or practically' does not take us far. It is easier to identify a wise man than to define wisdom. As an example of a truly wise man of our century, the name of Sri Ramakrishna inevitably occurs to one's mind. He barely possessed the knowledge of the three R's. Learned men and social leaders of his time came to listen to his discourses on different subjects. The homely way in which he explained

and elucidated many abstruse doctrines of religion and philosophy, showed his mastery over and thorough assimilation of the cardinal principles of those topics. The audience heartily enjoyed these talks that were sprinkled with sparkling wit and humour. They were struck dumb with wonder as to how an unlettered man of the village could solve easily the mystery of so many problems that puzzled men of erudition.

This clearly demonstrates the fact that wisdom does not necessarily depend upon knowledge as it is commonly understood. A quotation from Carlyle's speech delivered to the students of Edinburgh University may be of help to bring home this difference between knowledge and wisdom. Speaking of the true aim and ideal of education he observed: '... in regard to all your studies and readings here, and to whatever you may learn, you are to remember that the object is not particular knowledges—not that of getting higher and higher in technical perfections and all that sort of things.... You are ever to bear in mind that there lies behind that the acquisition of what may be called wisdom... Great is Wisdom; infinite is the value of Wisdom.... It is the highest achievement of man.'

Carlyle's words strike one as an echo of Lord Kṛṣṇa's assertion in the Gita: 'There is nothing in this world more sacred than wisdom.' (4.38) The means of attaining this wisdom is also pointed out in the same verse: 'True wisdom spontaneously illuminates the mind that has practised yoga.' What, then, is the yoga which produces true wisdom? The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines yoga thus: 'Hindu system of philosophic meditation and asceticism designed to effect the reunion of the devotee's soul with the universal spirit'. Thus the realization of the individual's soul as a part and parcel of the Universal Soul constitutes supreme knowledge or true wisdom.

The Hindu scriptures, the four Vedas and the Upaniṣads, have for their aim the inculcation of this supreme wisdom. The well-known *mahā-vākyas* or Great Dicta of the four Vedas contain this wisdom in a nutshell. These statements are *prajñānam brahma* 'Intelligence is the Supreme Reality' (*Ṛg-Veda*); *aham brahma asmi* 'I am the Supreme Being' (*Yajur-Veda*); *tat tvam asi* 'That thou art' (*Sāma-Veda*); *ayam ātmā brahma* 'This spirit is the Supreme Being' (*Atharva-Veda*). The present age seems to have forgotten this ideal of integral experience. It has mistaken mere knowledge for wisdom. It erroneously thinks that wisdom can be attained by cramming the mind with knowledge of diverse subjects. The present system of academic education therefore lays stress only on acquiring proficiency in various subjects, and not on the awakening of the soul whereby, in the words of Wordsworth, we may be able to 'see into the life of things'. In other words, it does not take account of the power of penetrating the outward garb of appearance and perceiving Ultimate Reality.

The term 'education' comes from the root-word *educe*, which means, 'to draw out'. To educate, therefore, really means to draw out what remains hidden or 'covered' in the deep recesses of the human mind. This naturally reminds us of Swami Vivekananda's famous defimition of education as 'the manifestation of the perfection already in man'. According to him the term 'to know' really means to 'dis-cover'. As he explained it: 'Knowledge is inherent in man; no knowledge comes from outside. What we say a man *knows* should, in strict psychological sense, be what he *discovers* or *unveils*; what a man *learns* is really what he *discovers*, by taking the cover off his soul.' But this

etymological and true sense of education seems gradually to be sinking into oblivion.

Socrates, the wisest man in the West in ancient times, pointed out the right means of attaining wisdom thus: 'Know thyself'. In the Indian Upaniṣads we hear the same teaching in the inspired utterance of the sages: *Ātmānam viddhi*. The human mind is a miniature replica of the universe; it is a microcosm in a macrocosm. The gaining of intimate knowledge of this inner universe fosters a depth of awareness in which everything in the universe finds its proper place and meaning. This liberation of the mind and its view of things in their proper perspective constitute wisdom in the true sense of the term.

In the existing system of academic education this ideal of the totality of vision, integral knowledge, is conspicuous by its absence. It does not aim at enabling the learner to 'draw out' the latent powers of his mind—from the power of logical analysis to that of aesthetic appreciation—nor does it attempt at providing him with a frame of mind by which any particular piece of knowledge acquired by him can be put in the right or proper place in his life and Weltanschauung.

That the knowledge imparted by academic institutions of our day does not amount to wisdom has been nicely brought out by Aldous Huxley in his widely popular book, *Ends and Means*. In the chapter entitled 'Education', Huxley has divided the recipients of academic education into three categories. His inimitable way of expression deserves to be quoted: 'Many of those who are able to stay the course of an academic education emerge from the ordeal either as parrots gabbling remembered formulas which they do not understand; or, if they do understand, as specialists, knowing everything about one subject and taking no interest in anything else; or finally, as intellectuals, theoretically knowledgeable about everything, but hopelessly inept in the affairs of ordinary life.' Thus it becomes evident that they become *educated*, but not wise.

An identical idea is expressed by Will Durant in the preface to his *The Story of Philosophy*: 'The specialist put on blinders in order to shut out from his vision all the world but one little spot, to which he glued his nose. Perspective was lost. "Facts" replaced understanding; and knowledge, split into a thousand isolated fragments, no longer generated Wisdom.'

The limitation of academic education becomes evident to us when we consider how many of the masterpieces of art and literature have come from the hands of persons who were quite innocent of such education. Two of the greatest geniuses of the literary world, Kālidāsa and Shakespeare, had no academic education. But their compositions have continued to be prescribed in the syllabi of the highest academic courses. Their oracular wisdom was not born of knowledge acquired from academic institutions. It originated from within. Matthew Arnold's eulogy on Shakespeare is to the point: 'Self-School'd, Self-Scann'd, Self-honour'd, Self-Secure'. So are those of Ben Jonson, Milton and Gray. Ben Jonson asserts about Shakespeare: 'He was not of an age, but for all time!' in spite of the fact that he had 'small Latin and less Greek'. Milton points to the inborn genius of Shakespeare thus:

> Sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's Child,
> Warble his native wood-notes wild.

And Gray echoes the same sentiment in his 'Progress of Poesy' by calling Shakespeare, 'Nature's darling'. What is true of Shakespeare, is equally true of Kālidāsa. The profound wisdom revealed in their works was not derived from knowledge imparted in academic institutions.

The story that is in vogue about the sudden and spontaneous gushing forth of emotion in the form of a rhymed couplet from the lips of unlettered Vālmīki may be a myth, but it is undoubtedly indicative of that illumination from within which is another name for wisdom. A more well-known example is the case of Gautama Buddha where supreme wisdom (*bodhi*) came from within him and not from without.

Disillusioned about bookish knowledge, Wordsworth, the poet-priest of Nature, proclaims:

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:
....
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be Your Teacher.
....
Enough of Science and of Art,
Close up those barren leaves;

(*Tables Turned*)

Wordsworth could be so emphatic in his denunciation of bookish knowledge because he had gained the miraculous power of intuition which enabled him to gain a cosmic vision that amounted to pantheism. The following lines from his *Tintern Abbey* bear testimony to the inner light that he possessed:

And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and the mind of man.

The horizon of knowledge is widening day by day. This is especially true of the realm of science. The result is intensive specialization. There is, however, no inclination to relate the particular results of such specialization with human life as a whole and its relation to the universe at large. Aldous Huxley's observation in this respect may be quoted: 'The mass of accumulated knowledge is so great that it is now impossible for any individual to have a thorough grasp of more than one small field of study. Meanwhile, no attempt is made to produce a comprehensive synthesis of the general results of scientific research. Our universities possess no chair of synthesis.'

Thus there may be actually such an object as a 'learned fool', paradoxical as it may sound! And it was the thought of such a bookish scholar that elicited from Alexander Pope, the greatest satirist of the 18th century, the following stinging remark:

The bookful blockhead ignorantly read
With loads of learned lumber in his head.

Wisdom is the essential prerequisite of a complete man, a man of integrity. The lack of it in the present age has resulted in the growth of man with split personality, the man whose 'each half', in the words of Matthew Arnold, 'lives a hundred different lives.' No wonder therefore Thomas Hardy, the eminent English poet and novelist, should diagnose the character of the present age as one in which there is 'plethoric growth of knowledge simultaneously with the stunting of wisdom'.

We may conclude by referring to the nostalgic sentiment of T.S. Eliot expressed so poignantly in the lines:

Where is the Wisdom we have lost in Knowledge?
Where is the Knowledge we have lost in Information?

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

MYTHOLOGIES AND PHILOSOPHIES OF SALVATION IN THE THEISTIC TRADITIONS OF INDIA: BY PROF. KLAUS K. KLOSTERMAIER. Published by Wilfred Laurier University Press, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, N2L 3C5. 1984. Pp. 550. $ 20.

The aim of religion is usually taken to be salvation. This position is more true of the religio-philosophical tradition of India. The salvific attitude is grounded in the Vedic as well as the Shramanic traditions of the country, with the exception of the Lokāyata school. *Mukti, moksha, nirvana* or *kaivalya*—all meaning freedom from mundane suffering—are some of the popular terms in Indian context used to denote salvation. The striving of man to get rid of present and future suffering gives rise to a particular soteriology which is shaped by the cultural milieu of the group of people. But the search for freedom is a universal common factor found in all soteriological modes of expression.

Prof. Klaus Klostermaier (b. 1933) of the University of Manitoba (Dept. of Religion) has taken upon himself the stupendous task of studying in detail the mythologies and philosophies of salvation in the theistic traditions of India. He has been able to present a comprehensive picture of the Hindu idea of salvation, the central conception of any theology. He brings together, systematically, the mythologies and philosophies of salvation of the four major theistic systems of Hinduism, namely, the Vedic, the Vaishnava, the Shaiva and the Shakta. He is able to find a unified pattern behind the great diversity of myths, rituals, and other modes of religious expression. For him the mythologies and philosophies of salvation in the Indian tradition, although heterogeneous and diverse, agree in one point: humanity reaches its true fulfilment in its freedom—a freedom that requires the coordination and cooperation of human and cosmic forces, a freedom that begins and ends in the depth of the human soul, a freedom that is ultimate.

The distinction between the rational and the non-rational approaches of man to reality has been made in various forms. The author of the book under review has categorized these two aspects of the human nature as mythology and philosophy. Myths, for him, are integral and indispensable facts of historical religion. Philosophy, on its part, deals with the doctrinal aspects of the existential elements. The predominent reflective aspect of philosophy creates at times the impression that it is merely speculative and transcending. Hence the categorization of myths and philosophies as positive and negative approaches to the world. Distinguishing the two elements in our nature, the author plainly says: the myths accept the visible universe as intrinsically good and enjoyable; philosophies view it as illusory, deceptive and dangerous. And when such a distinction is made in the Indian context, it subscribes to the thesis of Albert Schweitzer that Indian thought is life-and-world-negating. Any scholar familiar with the religio-philosophical traditions of India would not make such statements without reservations.

The author makes elaborate distinctions between myth and philosophy. He notes that myths have a tendency to develop their anthropomorphism into figures with lives of their own, and often they hypostatize the abstractions of the philosophies. Philosophies, on their part, allegorize the concrete figures and events of a myth. They see in all myths the description of purely spiritual, mystical, interior events. Further, in mythology the means of salvation are usually external, but in philosophy such means are discarded. Myths treat salvation as the work of God, the Saviour. But in philosophy we find a stress on man's share in salvific acts. At times even God is discarded in the process of salvation.

But the author is aware of the complementarity of the two approaches. He notes that the two are not necessarily antagonistic; they meet in *upāsanā* (worship). Worship of images is a distinct feature of the Indian tradition. In India mythologies and philosophies not only meet, but also fertilize each other. They are able to combine together in *upāsanā* because man is spirit-in-body.

The combination of myths and philosophies is possible because of their common features as well. Both describe man in need of salvation; both reveal profound insights into the nature of man. Further, both teach that reality is one and the cause of unhappiness is a wrong differentiation in it. The author has correctly noted the two basic faculties which provide the motif of salvation. The motif of salvation has shaped the piety of the illiterate and the philosophy of the learned.

The study under review is divided into five parts. The first four parts deal with the conception of salvation in four major disciplines of Indian tradition and the fifth one presents the synthesis and the conclusion of the study. Let

us have a brief idea of these parts.

In the first part of the book Indra has been depicted as the saviour of the Vedic people. The slaying of Vritra by Indra is treated as the great salvation myth of Vedic literature. Vritra represents demons as well as clouds. Indra releases the waters and the cows (symbol of truth). The act of saving is repeated. Several Indras slay thousands of Vritras in different times. Gradually the Vritrahan (Indra) becomes the Supreme Saviour. The author has also shown the decline of Indra's position. He notes that in later Vedic texts Indra becomes a seeker of truth. Still later texts exhibit the superiority of sectarian gods over Indra by restating and reinterpreting the popular myth. For example, Vishnu is shown as helping Indra fight the demon. In the *Bhāgavata Purāna* we find Krishna defying Indra at Govardhana. And Indra slowly recedes into the background of Indian theology.

The *Brāhmanas* emphasize the ritualistic grounds for salvation. The objective performance of *yajñas* (sacrifices) in accordance with the prescribed rules earns for a person a heavenly state after death. The Mīmāmsa system has developed a philosophy of ritualism which does not require a personal agent as saviour. It is the universal moral principle of Dharma which provides freedom from the bonds of karma and rebirth. Here man himself is the maker of his destiny. No infusion or imputation of divine grace is necessary for his salvation.

Part two of the book deals with Vishnu as Saviour. Vishnu is presented as a partly Aryan and partly non-Aryan deity. As sun-god (cf. *Brihaddevata,* II. 64) he is Aryan; as sky-god (cf. Tamil word *vin* = sky) he is of Dravidian origin. But the majority of the scholars do not find any difficulty in treating Vishnu as primarily a Vedic god. Several Vedic hymns are addressed to him (cf. *Ṛg-Veda* I,154-6; VII, 99-100). The famous *Purusha-Sūkta* suggests the saving nature of the deity. In the Upanishads he is the protector of the embryo in the wombs (vide *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad,* VI. 4.21). In Vedic literature Vishnu is usually designated as Trivikrama, the victor of the three regions after subduing Bali. The Vedic mythology of Vishnu overpowering Bali is enumerated in the epics and the *Puranas.* The ten incarnations of Vishnu (or even more; e.g. the *Ahirbudhnya Samhita* describes 39 incarnations of the deity) are accounts of his salvific deeds. They play a very important role in Vaishnava soteriology. In later Vaishnava tradition Vishnu appears as Saviour almost exclusively in his *avataras.* Rama and Krishna are regarded to be more popular incarnations of Vishnu. The cosmic God appears in personal form, from time to time, for salvific acts.

The Srivaishnava philosophy considers Sri (Goddess) as Saviour. The association of Goddess with Vishnu is supposed to have dual influences—Tantric as well as Greek. Krishna's character is analogous with that of Heracles of Greece.

Vaishnavism regards bhakti (love) as essential for salvation. Bhakti is the living religious faith; it is the firm and unshakable love for God which rises above all other ties of love and affection and is based upon an adequate knowledge and conviction of divine majesty (cf. *Mahabharata-tatparya-nirnaya,* 1.86). As bhakti has several stages, so has moksha. There is some difference of opinion regarding the role of grace in salvation. The grace of the Lord (and of the *Guru,* in later Vaishnavism) is considered very important. Some Vaishnava Acharyas (e.g., Vallabha) treat *anugraha* (divine grace) as the sole means of freedom. But in several other sects human effort is also treated to be necessary for salvation. Thus we find a clear distinction between unconditional surrender to God and a partial one. This is evident in the two theories of surrender in Srivaishnavism: The one advocated by the Vadagalais (northern school led by Vedanta Deshika) requires some human effort as in the case of the baby-monkey clinging to the belly of its mother. The other theory propounded by the Tengalais (southern school led by Pillai Lokacharya) holds that God takes care of every thing as the mother cat carries its kitten in her mouth.

Generally speaking, Vaishnava theologians do not admit of Jīvan-mukti (salvation during life). The author of the book under review has, on the basis of objective evidences, pointed out that in the Dvaita Vedanta of Madhva the concept of *aparoksha jñāna* (immediate knowledge) is akin to *jivan-mukti.* Jiva Goswami is also said to be aware of *mukti* during life-time (cf. his *Shat-sandarbha*). Later poets and mystics of Vaishnava cults emphasize moral values as essential for salvation. This, however, can be included in the category of human effort, although not specifically.

Part Three of the book discusses Shiva as Saviour. Four sources of Shaiva practices have been mentioned by the author. They are:

(i) Indus valley civilization, (ii) Dravidian (Tamil) culture (it is significant that Tamil terms *sivan* and *sembu* stand for red and copper respectively), (iii) tribal religions and (iv) the Vedic literature. The terrible Rudra of the earlier period gradually becomes benevolent and gets designations like Shiva and Ashutosha. The drinking of poison is the major myth associated with Shiva, the Saviour. Modern Shaivism uses the expression 'vicarious suffering' in the context. Destruction of Daksha's sacrifice is another important saving act of Lord Shiva. It is perhaps the oldest of the Shiva myths. Henceforth Shiva is called Mahādeva (the Great God). The *Mahābhārata* (Karna Parva) and the *Rāmāyana* (I, 65, 9-12) of Valmiki clearly refer to this myth. Killing of demon Tripura is another notable myth associated with Shiva, as described in the epics and the *Purānas*. Shiva's image depicting his dance on the back of Müyalaka is considered to be of salvific import (*anugraha tāndava*).

Although Shiva is supposed to have assumed many forms, gentle or fierce, the individuality of his incarnations remains vague and indistinct. He himself is worshipped as the Saviour God in the form of a *linga* or in anthropomorphic figures. Like Shiva, his consort Umā is also said to have assumed terrible as well as benevolent forms. At the time of her father's sacrifice she had issued Mahākālī to disturb the performance. She is also associated with the killing of Tripura.

Some scholars have tried to reconcile the Vedic and the Agamic traditions of Shaiva practices. Srikantha's commentary on the *Brahma-sūtras* (representing Vishista-Shaiva Vedanta) has done this job successfully. But such efforts lack in some others, like Sripati (14th century) whose *Srīkara-Bhāshya* on the *Brahmasūtras* represents the Shakti-vishishtādvaita school (mainly popular in Karnataka as the Lingāyata sect). This school does not admit any difference between the soul and the Lord, each qualified by Shakti. The Sivādvaitins of Kashmir, however, emphasize the recognition of Shivahood in one's own soul.

Part Four of the book depicts Devi (Goddess) as Saviour. The author notes that Devi as Mother Goddess precedes later patriarchal mythologies. The religious practices connected with Mother Goddess in the Mediterranean regions date back to 4,000 years before the Christian era. There is a clear affinity between Indus Valley findings and Greek female deities. This is clear in the formation of the term 'Umā' (cf. the Babylonian Ummu or Umma, the Arcadian Ummi, the Dravidian Amma, and the Scythian Ommo ; all designating mother goddesses). The excavated ancient villages in India exhibit the worship of goddess. Non-Aryan tribes worship female deities and have had matriarchal system of society. On such grounds the author opines that the main stream of Devi religion comes from non-Vedic sources. He also notes that the Purānas present a synthesis or amalgamation of the Vedic and the non-Vedic sources, and some of the secondary Purānas place Devi above male deities.

The *Devi-sūkta* of the *Ṛg-Veda* is the most important Vedic text of the Aryan tradition. Ushas, Prithvi, Rātri, Aditi, Vāk etc. are the names usually mentioned in Vedic texts for the Goddess. In the *Mahābhārata* (Bhīshma-parva, 23,4-16) a Devi stotra (hymn) precedes the *Bhagavadgita*. This is clearly a salvation-hymn. It is very significant from the point of view of the Shākta tradition. The Purānas enumerate various salvific deeds of the Goddess. The killing of the demon Mahisha is the most important salvation myth of the Purānas.

In the Tantras the Goddess occupies the supreme place. Shakti is the cause of liberation. The Tantras consider four paths to moksha, namely, *dakshina, vāma, siddhānta* and *kaula*. The last one is inclusive of the earlier paths. Rituals play an important role in Tāntric Sādhanā. In the leftist practices of the Tantric tradition, worldly desires are to be purified and then applied to the cherished goal. It is a kind of spiritual homoeopathy to be practised under an expert guide. Nothing is totally imperfect or evil in Tantrism. It emphasizes the oneness of enjoyment and liberation. The author of the book under review feels that Shāktism can be a philosophy of life suitable for a secular age. It is a philosophy of life in which liberation is not sought outside the world, but inside it, not through a separation from society but through participation in it.

The all-pervasive nature of Goddess is best found in the form of Earth (*prithvi*). The late Dr. Vasudeva Sharan Agrawal says about the Motherhood of Earth (in the *Atharva Veda*, XII, 1.12: *mātā bhūmih putro aham prithivyāh*) 'Mother Earth is the presiding deity of the age, let us worship her. Mother Earth lives by the achievements of her distinguished sons' (see his article, 'Mother Earth', in the *Nehru Abhinandan Granth*, pp. 490-96).

Part Five of the book presents a synthesis and

conclusion. The author feels that the history of Indian religions, treated in the four parts of the book, makes us realize that freedom is near and distinct; that it is a question of indepth choices, and that in the last analysis freedom is always identical with authentic humanity. He also finds that religion always transcends the categories created by our academic discipline. The true meaning of religion is to be found somewhere between agnosticism and gullibility, between cynicism and credulity. He finds, further, that the motif of salvation represents one of the basic types of religion and theology. It develops the conception of a Supreme Being separate from the world and from man—a reality which is not accessible to man except by a gracious descent of the Supreme. The history of religions also points out that salvation is not purely individual; it is a cosmic event. Krishna enumerates cosmic signs. Through the swallowing of the poison Shiva saves the entire world from ruin. Indra's victory liberates the waters and the cows. Vishnu saves Dharma (the cosmic law) responsible for the well-being of the universe.

The author also considers the relevance of the notion of salvation in modern age. Often the revolutions of the modern centuries (Copernican, Industrial, French, Darwinian and the computeric) meant the breakdown of the traditional thinking. Now there is a threat of extinction of mankind through the demons of nuclear, bacterial and chemical warfare. The philosophies of salvation make us see that the achievement of freedom requires human effort as much as the presence of the Transcendent. Modern Indian spiritual thinkers have restored the confidence in the liberating philosophy of India. They have reinterpreted the tradition and have also developed relevant ideologies. Tagore in the form of a modern Bhakta, Aurobindo as a modern Jñāni and Gandhi as a modern Karma-yogi have paved the path to *moksha*. Professional academic philosophers like S. K. Maitra, R. D. Ranade, G. R. Malkani, S. Radhakrishnan and T.R.V. Murti also affirm their acceptance of the traditional insights regarding salvation.

The work of Professor Klostermaier is indeed classic in its field. Nowhere else do we find such a meticulously documented account of the myths and philosophies of salvation in the Indian tradition. The author makes no claim to originality. But his attempt to find out a unifying approach amongst various traditions (theistic) is original. The reader is bound to see a unifying pattern behind the diversity of myths and philosophies of theistic Hinduism. He will also be persuaded to recognize that salvation is the central issue in religion—its raison d'etre. Scholars who treat God as the goal of religion will not controvert this point, nor will they who, devoid of any faith in God, treat freedom as a negative state (like the Buddhists).

As stated above, the work is well documented. The notes run to about 140 pages. An exhaustive bibliography has also been given by the author which will help researchers in the area. The index is also comprehensive. What is lacking in the book is a glossary of Sanskrit terms. Many untranslated Sanskrit terms have been used by the author. This might not cause difficulty to an Indian reader or to any orientalist. But for a new student of Indian religions abroad it could cause difficulties. There are many mistakes in the diacritical marking, both of omission and of commission. This is bound to be in a work like this, and especially in the first edition. It is hoped that these

(*Continued on page* 265)

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, BELUR MATH

RELIEF WORK DURING APRIL '86

Primary Relief: Saurashtra Draught Relief: Through our Rajkot Ashrama, 1,65,790 kgs. wheat, 25,700 kgs. mung dal and 10,085 kgs. molasses have so far been distributed among 16,214 persons of 160 villages in Rajkot and Surendranagar districts. In addition, everyday 1,20,000 litres of water are being supplied to 3,500 families through 12 distribution centres and 8 truck-loads of dry fodder have been distributed for 600 heads of cattle.

Sri Lanka Refugee Relief: Through our Madras (T. Nagar) Mission Ashrama, milk was served to 37,062 refugees sheltered at Mandapam and Tiruchi camps. Old clothes and snacks were also distributed among them.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

The New Educational Policy—Vocationalization

Ever since the Ministry of Education circulated its policy document *Challenge of Education,* it has become the subject of discussion and criticism in public forums and mass media. A discussion draft was also placed before the Parliament. The policy does not envisage radical departures from the 1968 blueprint but is rather a continuation of it. The present 10+2+3 pattern has been retained, but the ten years at school will henceforth be divided into 5/3/2.

Top priority has been given to universalization of primary education and vocationalization of education after the eighth standard. We reserve our comments on the former for a future occasion. Here we wish to focus attention on vocationalization. This of course is not a new concept at all. As early as 1937 Gandhiji wrote about it, and several committees, including those headed by Dr. Zakir Husain and B. G. Kher, recommended the introduction of 'Basic Education' at the primary level. These recommendations were accepted in principle by the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1944. But even after independence, Basic Education did not make much headway and soon came to be almost forgotten. The cause of this has been attributed to the neglect of Gandhism and the attraction of policy makers for western values. This charge has a grain of truth in it, but it fails to take into consideration the exigencies of practical life and the accelerating pace of development. The reintroduction of vocationalization, now at the secondary school level, may appear to be a needed corrective. But how far is it relevant to the socio-economic changes going on now in India ? Will it go the way Basic Education went ?

In an article published in the 1-2-86 issue of *Times of India* S.S. A. Aiyar has questioned the wisdom of vocationalizing general education. He refers to a World Bank study undertaken by two researchers, George Psacharapoulos and William Loxley in their book *Diversified Secondary Education and Development* (John Hopkins University Press). The book distils the results of a research project covering 4,000 students in Colombia and Tanzania. Vocationalization is supposed to reduce the craze for university education and white collar jobs, enable students to join the work force directly after leaving school, and to attract more students from the poorest families by making education more relevant to their needs. The above mentioned study shows that none of these assumptions are true in developing countries. Though there are some positive results, these are offset by the increased investment and recurring expenses on vocational schools. The existing conditions in India are such that a majority of schools are not in a position to meet the hardware (tools, machinery, laboratories, raw materials etc.) and software (textbooks, training of teachers, etc.) requirements of vocationalization.

According to Sri Aiyar an enormous network of non-formal training already exists in the homes of potters, weavers, producers of handicrafts and also small workshops, match factories, small restaurants etc. The TRYSEM (Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment) scheme has not been found successful. The needs of cities for skilled labour can be met by setting up a limited number of specialized institutions for industrial training. In sum, Sri Aiyar's suggestion is that instead of vocationalizing the entire school system, it is better to introduce vocational education only in limited areas in selected institutions. Perhaps, a better alternative is to introduce the track system.